Vol 6 **The War Illustrated** N° 153

SIXPENCE — Edited by Sir John Hammerton — APRIL 30, 1943

VICTORS OF THE MARETH LINE. This Eighth Army tank crew had a part in the smashing of Rommel's defences and are again ready to advance against the retreating Afrika Korps. They have put ticks against Alamein and Tripoli, and their next objective appears to be Tunis. "Another severe defeat has been inflicted by the Desert Army upon the Axis forces they have so long pursued," declared Mr. Churchill on March 30, 1943.

Photo, British Official: Crown Copyright

THE BATTLE FRONTS

by Maj.-Gen. Sir Charles Gwynn, K.C.B., D.S.O.

ROMMEL'S eviction from the Mareth Line and from the Wadi Akarit position marks the end of the first phase of the Battle of Tunisia. The intermediate pursuit phase that followed was of short duration ; the speed of the Eighth Army's pursuit compelled Rommel to abandon any intention he may have had of fighting rearguard action or of counter-attacking the First Army's columns which threatened his lines of retreat. It is not surprising that he has made good his escape in view of his readiness to cut his losses and sacrifice his Italian allies. Opposed by strong flank-guards holding highly defensible positions, the First Army columns operating from Fonduk, even if they had been more experienced troops, had little real chance of intercepting his retreat unless he had attempted to delay the advance of the Eighth Army.

By April 15 the stage was set for the second main phase of the battle—the attack on the outer ring of the final Axis position with which by that date the Allies were everywhere in contact. There may be a pause in land fighting for re-grouping and preparation before the attack is delivered ; but meantime the air offensive continues with a growing intensity which would seem to prohibit any attempt to carry out a "Dunkirk" evacuation. The final phase of the battle will not, however, be completed until Bizerta is captured, and it must be realized that it is defended by an inner ring of fortifications which may prove more capable of prolonged defence than the outer ring, strong as the latter undoubtedly is.

Now that the winter offensive in Russia has been brought to a close, I discuss below the events of the last year, and draw deductions from them as they seem to affect the outlook for the coming summer. Reasonable conclusions may, I think, be drawn.

TUNISIA

The battle of the Wadi Akarit, which was something more than a rearguard action, reduced Rommel's power for mischief. It compelled him to abandon his apparent intention to strike again at the Americans coming from El Guettar, and to withdraw the troops opposing them which he had reinforced with his Panzer reserves. With the Eighth Army in hot pursuit and with the net closing round him, he was left with no alternative but again to save what he could of his army by speed of flight. The Akarit battle that ended on April 6 was therefore not only an outstanding tactical victory but has had major strategical results. It was in many ways perhaps the most remarkable of the 8th Army's achievements under Montgomery's leadership.

The speed with which the attack was prepared, involving among other things the accumulation of reserves of ammunition for a heavy initial bombardment, for the barrage covering the assault and for subsequent pursuit, evidently exceeded Rommel's expectations—or otherwise he would not have dared to detach his Panzers to operate against the Americans. That the delivery of the attack in pitch darkness surprised the enemy is not to be wondered at, for it was practically without precedent. It has been universally accepted that attacks in complete darkness should be limited to small enterprises against well-defined objectives, and that large-scale attacks would court confusion and disaster. Montgomery, confident in the quality and experience of his troops, accepted the risk. The battle has practically brought to a close the operations of the 8th Army in an independent role. It has still heavy tasks ahead, but henceforth it will act as one of a group of armies and its actions in timing, direction and scale must be adapted to the general plan of the group.

RUSSIA

Germany, we know, has carried through a drastic comb-out of her man-power, apparently with the object not only of replacing her heavy casualties, but in order to raise new divisions. Great troop movements towards the Russian front are also reported. Does this mean that she intends to launch another great attempt to deprive Russia of all offensive power, or can it be otherwise interpreted ? An analysis of the achievements and failures of her last year's offensive shows little to encourage a new major attempt.

Last year, although the Reichswehr had suffered heavy casualties and had had desperate experiences of the rigours of the Russian winter, yet German man-power had not been seriously affected ; and there was no real difficulty, once the effects of winter hardships had worn off, in providing a striking force of formidable size and consisting of well-trained troops. Losses and expenditure of material, though heavy, cannot have been comparable with those of the last six months. The Germans had come very near to disaster, but as a whole their army had escaped. Russia in the preceding summer had had even more disastrous experiences, and her new armies were still neither fully trained nor equipped.

The prospects for an offensive, after a period for recuperation, were therefore on the whole distinctly favourable ; and when it was launched it met with immediate success to an encouraging degree. Yet the outstanding fact is that, in spite of great initial success, the momentum of the offensive was lost, and it was brought to a standstill short of almost all its objectives before the Russian counter-offensive turned partial success into disaster. Moreover, it was brought to a standstill by Russian troops that had suffered heavy initial defeats and without excessive employment of reserves earmarked for ultimate offensive employment.

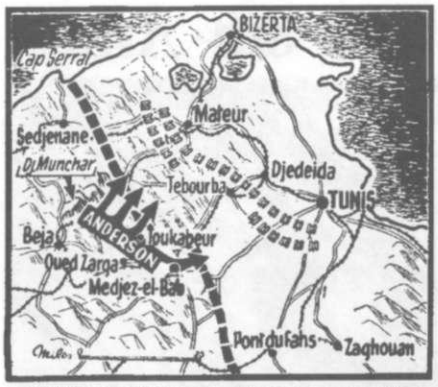
Mr. Stalin has told us that the Germans' original intention was to force the crossing of the Don on the Voronezh front to reach the Volga and then to wheel northwards towards Moscow, cutting its communications with the east and south. This plan, he holds, was only abandoned, in favour of the wheel south between the Don and Donetz, in consequence of the failure at Voronezh. British unofficial opinion, on the other hand, saw in the offensive an attempt to secure the Caucasian oilfields and the use of Caucasia as a base for the development of a great pincer movement against the British in the Middle East.

Either of these interpretations may represent the ultimate directions in which success might have been exploited, but it seems more probable that the primary aim was to defeat decisively the whole left wing of the Russian armies, to reach the Volga in order to reduce Russia's offensive potential by cutting her off from her main source of oil supply, and to secure the oilfields of Northern Caucasia for Germany.

The successful Russian defence at Voronezh had certainly far-reaching results, for it made it more difficult to reach the Volga, and left the Russians with lateral railway communications from the centre to the south—communications which were essential to the defence of Stalingrad and to the development of the ultimate counter-offensive. It is, however, hard to believe that the German

'CONGRATULATIONS, GENERAL!' Striding through the rough stubble of an airfield not far from the Mareth Line, General Eisenhower, Allied C.-in-C. in North Africa, greets General Montgomery, intrepid commander of the Eighth Army. "The record of the Eighth Army is too brilliant to need any praise," said General Eisenhower on March 31.

Photo, British Official : Crown Copyright



TUNISIAN BATTLES. These maps show the approximate fronts at April 9, 1943. In the north General Anderson's First Army was thrusting hard towards Tebourba and Mateur, while 150 miles to the south General Patton's Americans had joined the Eighth Army.
By courtesy of The News Chronicle

wheel south was an improvised change of plan, and it seems more probable that it was a development of the pursuit of Timoshenko's defeated army and aimed at co-operating with the forces attacking in the Donetz basin towards the Lower Don.

Be that as it may, the wheel was undoubtedly up to a point a successful manoeuvre, though it failed to turn Timoshenko's defeat into a complete disaster. He, in fact, was able to make a determined stand on the Don at Tsimlyansk, and gained much valuable time. He was unable, however, permanently to maintain his position; with the result that his Army of the Caucasus became isolated from the Army of the Volga at Stalingrad. The failure of the Russians to hold the line of the Lower Don opened the way for almost the only German success brought to fruition in the capture of Novorossisk and Maikop.

FROM then onwards the German offensive was brought to a standstill before reaching its immediate objectives. It failed to reach the port of Tuapse and the Grozny oilfields; and though it did succeed temporarily in closing the Volga to through traffic, Stalingrad held out, and attempts to reach the Lower Volga at Astrakhan also failed. After an auspicious beginning the offensive had failed to achieve its main purposes, however moderate we may assume them to have been, and in particular it had failed to rob the Soviet armies of their offensive potentialities. A part only of those armies had been struck by an immense concentration of German land and air power, yet it had survived.

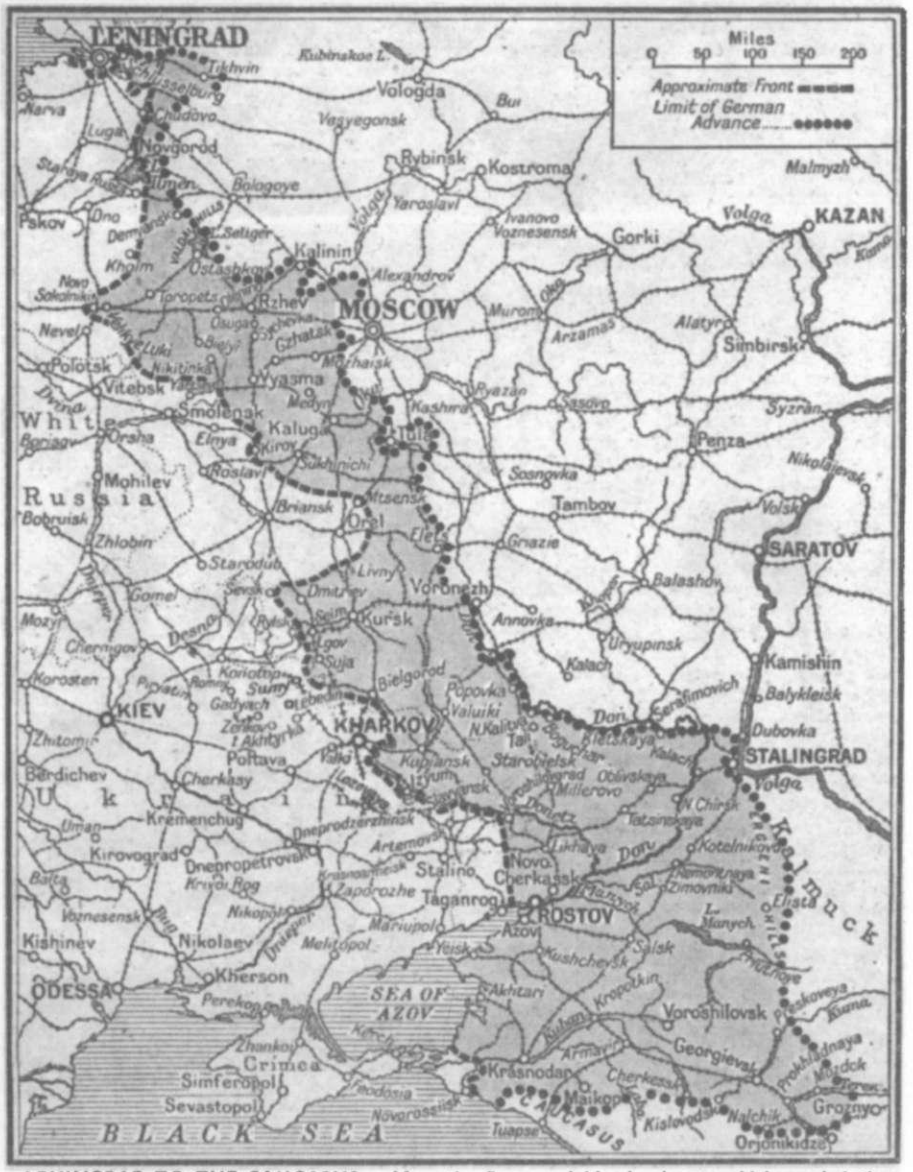
The German failure was certainly not due to a falling-off in the fighting quality of their troops or in the executive skill of their commanders. Nor apparently was failure due to lack of numerical strength, though possibly the available forces were given too many objectives. The main reason for failure was undoubtedly the improved quality of the Soviet armies, due to the experience the troops and their leaders had gained. The result of failure was to leave the offensive armies in a dangerous bulge, and the whole army with an immensely longer front to defend.

We know the consequences. The Germans are almost everywhere back to the line from which the offensive started last summer and, so far as their picked troops are concerned, in seriously reduced strength.

Is there anything in this record to encourage hopes that a renewed large-scale offensive would have greater success even if numerical strength may be recovered or even increased by the arrival of inexperienced and less well-trained formations? The Germans certainly have again staved off complete disaster, though more through luck of the weather than by a display of genius by the higher command. Strategical genius has been much more apparent on the Russian side; and the chief credit that can still be given to the Reichswehr is the fighting quality of its troops and the executive skill of its staff and subordinate commanders. But even in that respect is there much difference in the opposing armies? The one thing which appears to me to favour the Germans is that they retain control of a good and well-organized system of railway communications which would enable them rapidly to concentrate an offensive force; whereas for a considerable time the Russians must operate in a devastated area which cannot quickly be reorganized. Those conditions certainly offer the Germans opportunities to stage an early offensive with strictly limited objectives, provided they can muster an adequate striking force—which the relief of experienced divisions on defensive sections of the front by newly-formed divisions might enable them to do. But to undertake a far-reaching sustained offensive would require much longer time for preparation, and thus give the Russians a chance of improving their recovered communications and generally recuperating and reorganizing after their winter exertions.

THE conclusion I arrive at, therefore, is that the Germans probably intend a limited offensive as soon as possible after the thaw. The troop movements from Germany seem to indicate the arrival of newly-formed divisions for the relief of experienced formations, required either for offensive purposes or for withdrawal to Germany to form a central reserve in view of possible developments in the West or in the Mediterranean theatre. The divisions which recently appeared on the Dnieper to save the situation which threatened armies in the Donetz were probably drawn from some such central reserve, and if so would certainly require replacement in view of the growing threat in the West.

I cannot believe that in view of their disappointing experiences last year the Germans would entangle themselves in another attempt to secure decisive results in Russia—unless, and until, the general war situation should take a definite turn in their favour.



LENINGRAD TO THE CAUCASUS. After the fierce and bloody riposte which carried the Germans for the second time into Kharkov, most of the Russian front subsided into an uneasy stability. The spring thaws were reported to be hampering movement. This map shows at a glance the territories regained by the Russians between Dec. 6, 1942 and early April of this year.
By courtesy of The Times

Yet Another Battle Honour for the 8th Army

THE MARETH LINE, so strong by nature and made infinitely stronger by the military art of French (and most recently German) engineers, proved no great obstacle to the 8th Army. On March 29, 1943 an announcement from Allied Headquarters in North Africa said that : " The whole of the strong organized defences of the Mareth position are now in our hands." Our lower photograph is of a British Bren-carrier passing a shop wellnigh destroyed by shellfire in the village of Mareth. Top, men of the Durham Light Infantry " dug in " in an anti-tank ditch . a photograph taken in an early phase of the grim battle for Wadi Zigzau. (See p. 718.)

Photos, British Official

Not *All* Our 20,000 Prisoners were Italians

THOUSANDS OF PRISONERS were captured by Montgomery's men in the battle for the Mareth Line, and the subsequent pursuit to Sfax and Sousse. The majority were Italians; our upper photograph shows a couple surrendering with characteristic demonstrativeness to a Highland officer at the revolver-point. Most of the available transport was used by Rommel to get away his cherished veterans of the Afrika Korps; but, all the same, a number of Germans fell into our bag. Below, quite a considerable batch is being watched over by a Green Howard. *Photos, British Official*

Rommel's Flank Rolled Up by the Americans

TROOPS OF THE U.S. FIFTH ARMY have seen some hard fighting while operating against Rommel's right flank in Central Tunisia. Among the places the Americans captured in their offensive towards the end of March was Maknassy; the railway station is shown in 1, with U.S. soldiers patrolling the deserted track. 2, An American air pilot explores an enemy "fox-hole." 3, Italian prisoners captured by the Americans near El Guettar 4. Bombs bursting near a convoy of American trucks.

Photos, U.S. Official; Associated Press

Gabès Greets the Victors with Smiles and Flowers

WELCOMING THE EIGHTH ARMY INTO GABÈS, these excited inhabitants of the port clambered on to a British armoured car bearing the emblem of the famous Highland Division, as New Zealanders and men of the Black Watch entered the town on March 30, 1943. Gabès was plundered by the Germans before they abandoned the place. Shops and houses were stripped of doors, windows and furniture, and streets were left in a well-nigh ruined condition. *Photo, British Official: Crown Copyright*

THE WAR AT SEA

by **Francis E. McMurtrie**

THE Battle of the Atlantic continues to be the outstanding feature of the situation at sea. Upon its issue depends the whole fate of the War, for without the food, munitions and other supplies which are brought to this country, Russia and Africa the campaign against the Axis Powers could not be waged.

Undoubtedly the Germans are making a supreme effort to intensify the U-boat war against commerce, an effort which has been foreshadowed in these columns. How far their plans have been fulfilled it is impossible to say without fuller knowledge than is likely to be vouchsafed until the end of the struggle. Such information as is available tends to be conflicting; and the public may well be puzzled at times to know whether things are going well or badly.

IT is, of course, beyond doubt that enemy claims are invariably exaggerated, but to what extent is somewhat doubtful. In their latest figures it is alleged that U-boats destroyed 13 vessels of 851,600 tons during the month of March. This statement is almost certainly intended to excite comparison with the month of April 1917, the worst period in the whole of the last war, when 881,000 tons of shipping were lost. It may therefore be regarded as pure propaganda—designed to depress the spirits of the Allies and to raise those of the German and Italian peoples.

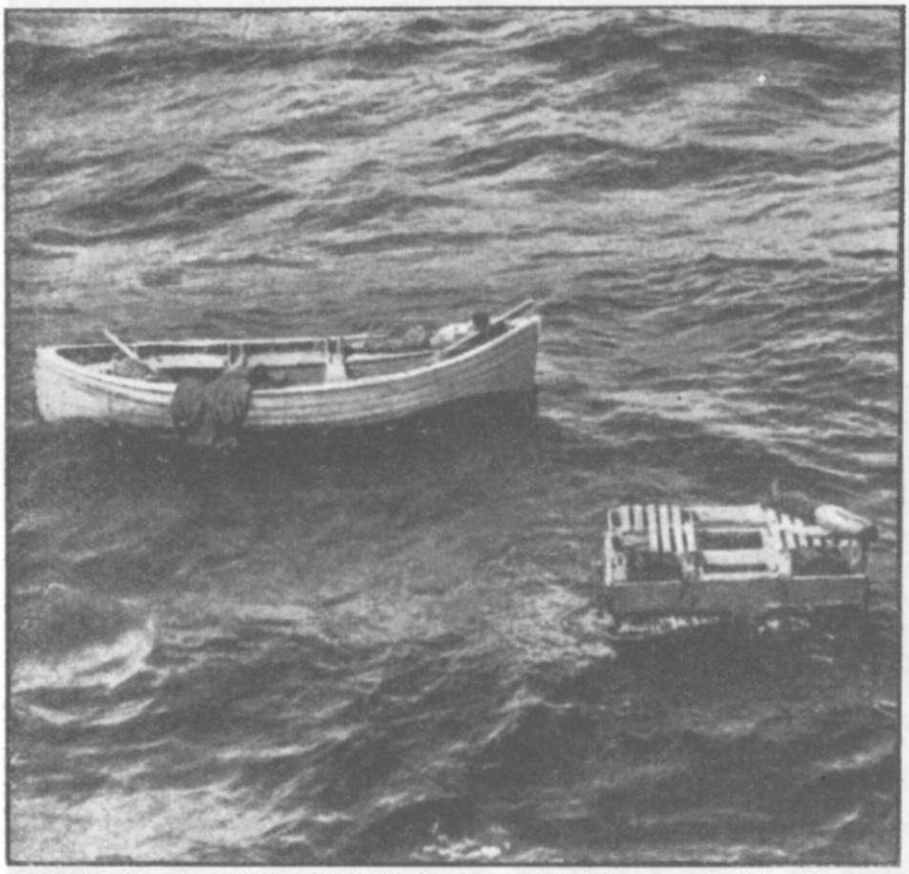
Apart from this, it has long been known that U-boat captains are in the habit of claiming as a total loss every merchantman upon which an attack is made, thus providing an inflated basis which can be still further swollen by the Berlin propaganda department to any extent deemed expedient.

Against this alarming background may be placed the announcements made on both sides of the Atlantic by those in charge of anti-submarine operations, or responsible for informing the public concerning them.

Mr. Elmer Davis, director of the U.S. War Information office, has admitted that March was worse than either of the two preceding months for the number of U-boat sinkings; but he added that the figure was far lower than the total for the worst month in 1942. Mr. A. V. Alexander's statement that during the past eight months Allied shipping gains have exceeded losses by a good deal more than 2,000,000 tons threw little further light on the present situation. Next came a gravely-worded warning from Colonel Knox, Secretary of the United States Navy, that during March shipping losses in the Atlantic had taken a serious turn for the worse.

Apart from all these vaguely-worded utterances, there is the known fact that for some time past the enemy have been turning out new U-boats faster than we have been sinking them. Against this it may be urged that the number of escort vessels is also being increased at a more rapid rate than ever before; but it may be doubted whether convoys are yet sufficiently strongly escorted to withstand all the attacks they may meet under present conditions.

It is the settled policy of the Allies not to reveal figures of shipping losses, lest these prove a useful guide to the enemy. Yet it must be agreed that the absence of such figures is apt to cause disquiet in Allied countries. There is indeed something to be said for the argument advanced recently by the New York Times, that it should at least be possible to devise some means of public information—such as a monthly percentage of cargoes safely delivered in terms of those shipped—which would illuminate the present darkness. Without some such indication of the trend of the battle—which could if thought fit be withheld for a couple of months before publication—vaguely reassuring announcements are apt to fail in their purpose.



DRIFTING IN THE NORTH ATLANTIC after their ship had been torpedoed by a German U-boat, these three exhausted survivors were picked up by a Canadian corvette. When found—two in the small boat and one on the raft—they were overcome by shock and exposure, and had fallen asleep. *Photo, Planet News*

ROMMEL'S Predicament and the Dunkirk Precedent

As I write, Rommel is in retreat from his positions north of the Gabès gap and speculation is rife concerning the chances of the Axis armies in Tunisia staging a withdrawal of the Dunkirk type. Circumstances are at first sight very similar, but a good many differences reveal themselves on examination.

To begin with, the enemy must have realized for a long time past that there could be only one end to his resistance, however protracted. With their customary thoroughness, the German General Staff would have made plans to evacuate the maximum number of troops when the time came. At Dunkirk, on the other hand, the crisis developed so rapidly and unexpectedly that much had to be left to improvisation; and but for the prescience of the Admiralty in arranging beforehand for a pool of small craft to be held in readiness for any emergency, it is doubtful if more than a fraction of the force that retreated on Dunkirk could have been saved.

At Dunkirk only the port itself and a few beaches in its immediate vicinity could be used for embarkation, whereas in Tunisia the indented coastline from Bizerta to Sousse is not far short of 200 miles in length, with numerous points suitable for taking off troops in small vessels.

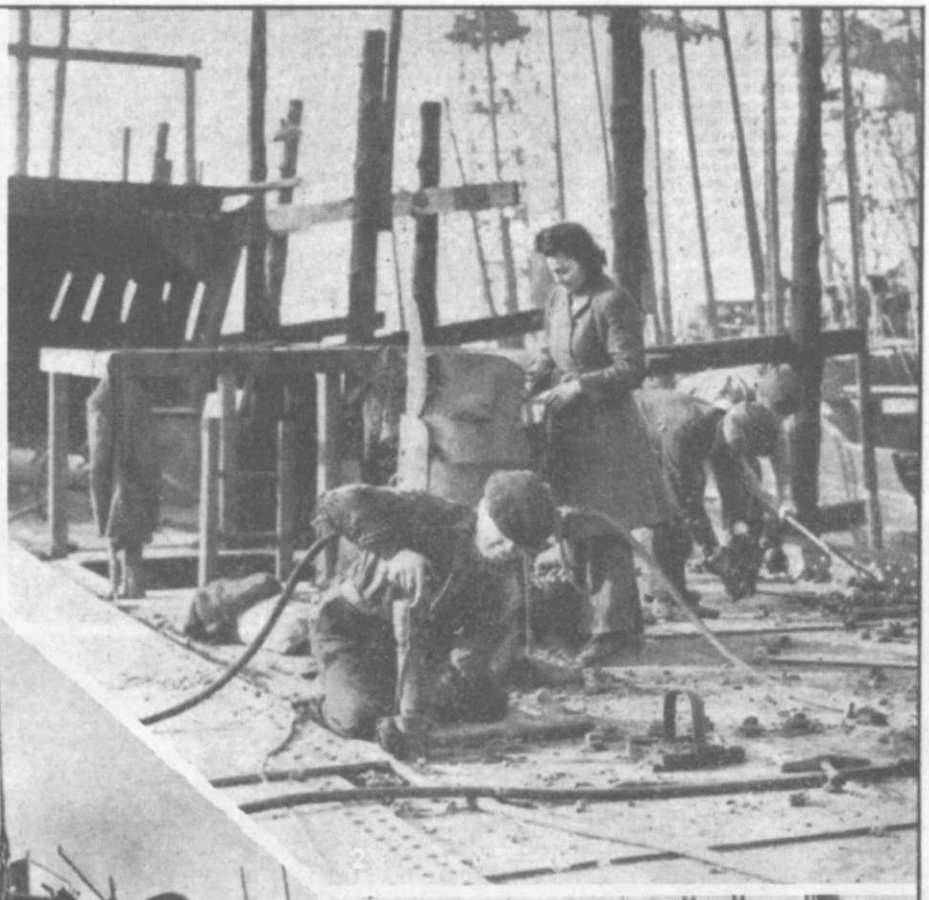
IT may be assumed that generals, with their staffs and some of the picked troops, will be flown off in transport planes, probably under cover of darkness. In fact, as far as possible it is likely that evacuation by sea will also be attempted at night, as being less liable to interruption by air attack.

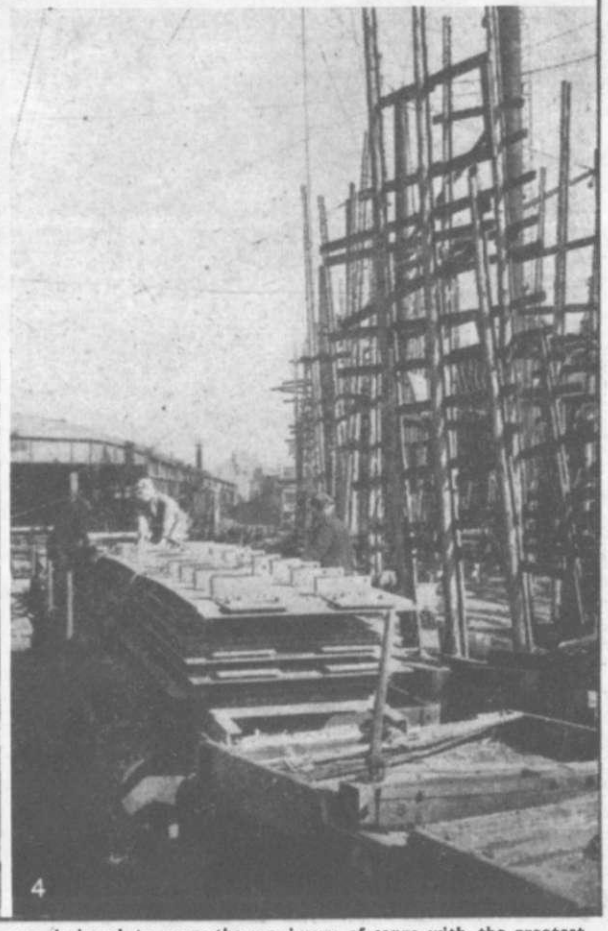
It is not believed that big liners will be employed by the enemy as transports to take troops from Tunisia. Half-a-dozen such ships have been lost during 1941-42 while in transit from Italy to Libya, proving that they are ideal targets for submarines and aircraft. Ships used will doubtless range from medium-sized merchant ships to quite small craft, such as schooners, barges, etc. It is reported that a number of French vessels have proceeded from Marseilles to Cagliari, the capital of Sardinia. That port lies at the south end of the island, and being only 120 miles from Bizerta is the nearest harbour of importance to which troops could be transported.

It may also be expected that the Luftwaffe will concentrate all the aircraft that it can spare to provide some sort of umbrella for the evacuation—if one is attempted. There is always, of course, the possibility that at the last we shall close in on the enemy forces with such rapidity that only a minority will succeed in embarking.

That the Italian fleet will issue from its harbours of refuge in the north of the peninsula to cover the retreat of the Germans from Tunisia is hard to believe, in view of its past record, to say nothing of the fact that in every recent action the Germans have left their allies in the lurch with a single eye to their own advantage. In any case, the British fleet in the Mediterranean may be trusted to look after the situation and to miss no chance of intercepting enemy ships.

Slowly but Surely Are Our Lost Ships Replaced





BRITAIN'S FAST NEW MERCHANTMEN, replacing those lost by enemy action, are designed to carry the maximum of cargo with the greatest measure of safety. 1, Women painters hard at work. 2, This girl heats rivets which are punched in to secure the top deck of the ship. 3, Hoisting a propeller into position preparatory to fitting. 4, Arriving by rail, these prefabricated parts are to be incorporated in a 10,000-ton cargo ship. Some 60 of these ships were recently built in two well-known British yards, their type being closely related to the many hundreds of U.S. "Liberty" ships.

Photos, Keystone, Daily Mirror, Topical Press

How 'Sparrow Force' Fought the Japs in Timor

Exploits of Australian guerillas who have defied the Japs ever since the enemy occupation of Timor Island (E. Indies) over a year ago, make one of the most thrilling stories of the war. Right, three members of this band, officially known as "Sparrow Force," snipe at the enemy in the jungle.

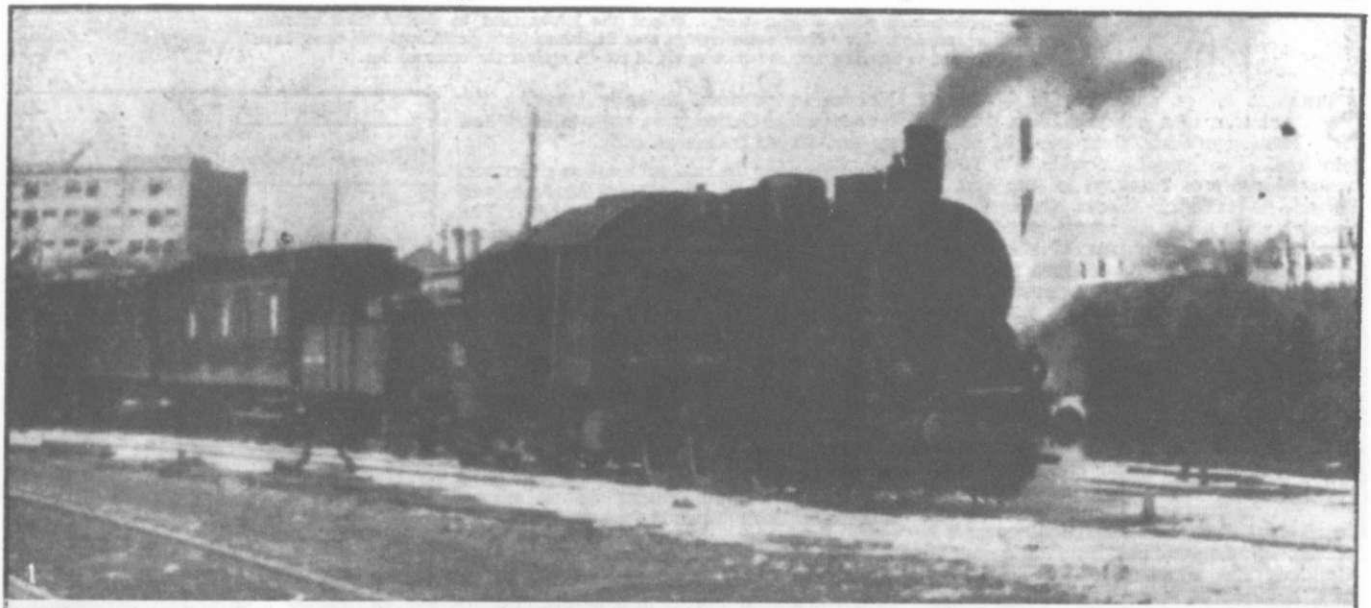
Using a Morse buzzer, this operator (below) tries to get through to Darwin. When the first messages were received Darwin suspected an enemy trap to lure rescuers into ambush; but the identity of the guerillas was established and medical supplies, letters and food are now reaching them.

Following the dispatch of supplies, Australia sent a photographer by a secret route. He filmed scenes showing the Australians and Dutch raiding enemy posts and pinning down a large Japanese force. The guerillas spread terror among enemy troops by lightning raids, killing over 100 Japs for every one of their own men lost. Above, letters being given out by the commander, Capt. G. Laidlaw.

Some of the Australians and the natives they befriended (left) brandish weapons as they dash through an enemy village which they have set alight. This village was occupied by antagonistic tribes in the pay of the Japs, and a fierce fight developed. The "Sparrow Force" has become adept at hiding from Japanese scouting aircraft in the jungle-covered hills of Timor.

Photos, British Newsreels Association

Life Is Good Again in Russia's Liberated Towns



NOW THE NAZIS HAVE BEEN DRIVEN OUT the people—such of them, that is, who have survived the murders and deportations of the occupation—of the areas freed by the Red Army are making heroic efforts to recapture the life that was theirs before the invasion. 1, Radioed from Moscow, this photograph of a passenger train leaving Rostov's main station is evidence of speedy reconstruction. 2, Gathered in Engels Street, Rostov folk listen to an open-air broadcast of the latest battle news from Moscow. 3, Electricians repairing the installation at a Stalingrad power-station. Peasants returning to their liberated village.

Photos, U.S.S.R. Official; Planet News

Are There Really British Paratroops In Norway?

Three years have passed since British troops helped the Norwegians to defend their country against the Nazi invaders. Now there come reports that British soldiers, paratroops this time, have returned to Norway, and are once again in action against the common foe.

STRANGE things are afoot in Norway's "plateau of a hundred lakes," as the Hardangervidda, great mass of mountain and valley which occupies the south-western corner of Norway, to the east of Bergen, is called. From Oslo via the Swedish radio came the report on March 30 that the plateau, a matter of about 6,000 sq. miles, was to be closed from April 1 to all civilian traffic, and all hotels, sports establishments, and cabins were being taken over by the German military authorities. Hundreds of troops had been rushed to the district under the direct control of Terboven, the Nazi gauleiter, and the whole area was being subjected to a rigorous combing.

One of the reasons for the closure is stated by a Stockholm newspaper to be the German belief that the Allies will endeavour to establish aerodromes on the mountain plateau from which fighter aircraft could operate to protect invading troops; another is that the Germans are afraid that Hardangervidda may be used as a meeting-place for Norwegian patriots who could gather in the mountains to give support to Allied airborne troops. Apparently they suspect that a British paratroop H.Q. has already been established amid the barren heights—hence the careful search of the countryside; and some of the "invaders" are supposed to have been in action already.

Thus that highly successful act of sabotage which a few weeks ago put out of action the giant Norsk Hydro-Electro chemical plant at Rjukan, about 80 miles west of Oslo—Norway's biggest industrial concern and one which is of vital importance for Germany's war needs—was attributed to "three Norwegian-speaking men in British uniforms." The saboteurs escaped capture. A day or two later, on March 1, Oslo radio reported that twelve "British agents" had boarded a coastal steamer at a small port and forced the captain and crew, at the point of the revolver, to steam westwards, presumably to Great Britain.

Another week went by, and some of the R.A.F.'s Mosquitoes bombed the molybdenum mines at Knaben, near Stavanger, and the plant, Germany's main source of molybdenum, so important for hardening steel, received serious damage so that it will probably be out of action for a year. The German manager was killed. It is reported that as the Mosquitoes flew over Stavanger, Norwegian patriots, defiantly ignoring the ever-watchful Germans in their midst, stood up and waved enthusiastically.

Shortly after the raid on Knaben a German transport ship in Trondheim harbour was damaged and had to be beached. The saboteurs were not found, but six hostages were seized and 200 other people in Trondheim arrested on a charge of "illegal activity." Following the sabotage at Rjukan about ninety people were arrested, including some of the Norsk Hydro officials, and a curfew between 11 p.m. and 5 a.m. was imposed. Some of the arrested (reported a Swedish newspaper) were shot, and others sent to concentration camps.

To add to German nervousness, light craft of the Norwegian Navy are now operating in their own home waters against enemy shipping. For obvious reasons many of their offensive operations are not made public, but it was recently revealed that two large German transport ships were sunk by Free Norwegian Forces in a daring raid on the port of Floroe, north of Bergen, on March 14. The commander of one of the participating vessels is reported as saying, "We have a really enjoyable job. The best thing about it is that we really get to grips with the Germans on Norwegian soil, or at least in Norwegian waters."

YET another incident was reported by Oslo radio a little later. On the night of March 22 a group of saboteurs were landed on a German island-base off the Norwegian west coast by British motor torpedo-boats. According to the German story, the landing was repulsed "with heavy losses," the party leaving behind them ammunition, food supplies, maps and other material. The German losses were stated to be one man killed and another wounded.

Taken separately, these "incidents" may be regarded as being of no great consequence judged on the scale of world-wide war. But added together they have an altogether different complexion. They serve to keep the Germans in Norway "on the jump," and there are abundant signs that the invaders are getting very jittery indeed. More than eleven hundred miles long, with a coast-line—such are the innumerable indentations, the fjords and islands—of some twelve thousand miles, Norway is an exceedingly difficult country to occupy by an invading

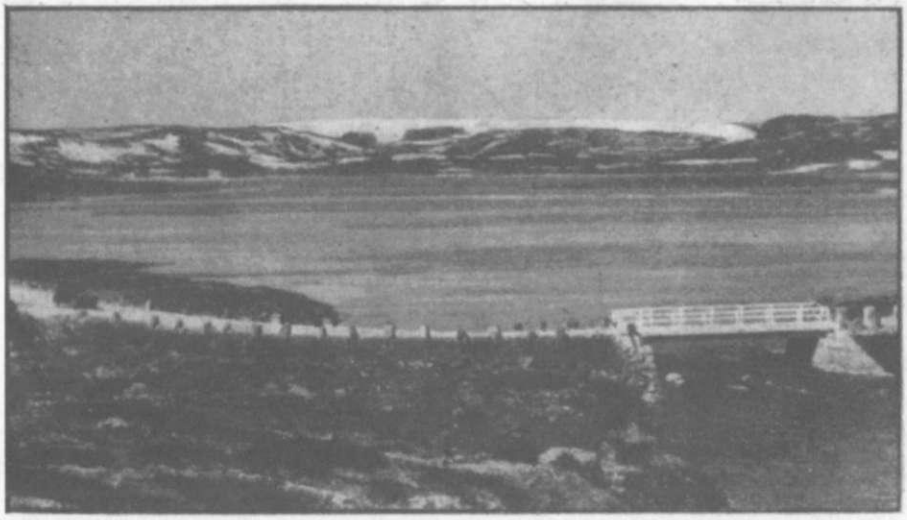
S.W. NORWAY, showing the Hardanger Plateau, 75 miles E. of Bergen, which was declared a forbidden zone by the Germans from the beginning of April 1943.

force; and the task is made all the more difficult, even impossible, by the relentless hostility of the vast majority of the Norwegian population. There are some Norwegians who have come to terms with the Germans—the Fascists who form the Nasjonal Samling headed by Major Vidkun Quisling, father of all the quisling tribe; but these traitors are regarded with a contemptuous hatred by the Norwegian folk as a whole. Quisling's party has probably never touched the fifty thousand mark, and his Hirdmen, equivalent of Hitler's Brownshirts, number only some two thousand. Efforts to raise a Norwegian legion to fight against the Russians have failed dismally.

AFTER three years of German occupation Norway's spirit is still unsubdued; and none know better than the Nazis that about 98 per cent of Norwegians are but waiting a favourable opportunity to revolt. That opportunity (the Nazis fear) will be afforded by an Allied invasion. In Norway—and also in Denmark, where there are likewise reports of landings by British paratroops—the Germans are openly discussing the possibility of an Allied landing in Scandinavia, and they have reported that the Allies are massing ships, barges and troops in Scotland and Iceland.

There would seem to be little doubt that the Germans in Norway really do fear an invasion, since they have made apparently such immense preparations to meet it. The civilian population has been evacuated from much of the coastal area, harbours have been mined, islands fortified, the whole coastline is constantly patrolled and coastal shipping subjected to close watch. Villages have been converted into strong points, towns and cities cluttered up with tank obstacles. A West Wall has been built somewhere inland, and to it have been transferred some of the guns from the Maginot Line. The country has been dotted with airfields, wherever the state of the ground has permitted their construction; and Trondheim, Bergen, Stavanger, and Narvik have been converted into naval bases. Then there is the army of occupation; how large we do not know, but 250,000 is a reasonable guess.

For sixty-two days in 1940 there was fighting in Norway. Now after three years the war has returned to Scandinavia.



HARDANGER PLATEAU, a wild and desolate region in S.W. Norway (see accompanying text), might seem to offer ideal conditions for paratroops' activities. On April 9 the Swedish newspaper Dagens Nyheter reported the arrival in this area of large numbers of Austrian Alpine troops to take part in the search for Allied saboteurs. *Photo, Norwegian Official*

These Women Win Honour for Devotion to Duty

MILLICENT I. RICHARDSON, A.T.S., awarded B.E.M. for displaying courage and devotion to duty on A.A. work during enemy raids in the Midlands. She is 23.

MARGARET JOHNSON, A.T.S., awarded B.E.M. An ambulance driver, she tried to rescue the occupants of a burning plane. Her hands were badly burned in her heroic efforts. Her home is at Altrincham.

DORIS ADAMS, W.L.A., awarded the Silver Medal of Our Dumb Friends' League for fearlessly rescuing two lambs from being gored to death by an infuriated bull. This medal is one that is very rarely presented.

MRS. MARION PATTERSON, awarded the G.M. for rescuing a sailor buried under 15 ft. of debris by a bomb explosion. She also crawled under wreckage and put out a fire.

SERGT. DORIS BLANKS, W.A.A.F., mentioned in dispatches for devotion to duty at R.A.F. Fighter Command. She was the first W.A.A.F. to work as a teleprinter.

CPL. DYSON and A.C.W. P. M. BEESON, W.A.A.F. balloon operators who, despite heavy bombing of their site in a London raid on Jan. 17-18, 1943, sent up their balloon to the required height. They are seen in a bomb crater.

CPL. JULIA SANDFORD, W.A.A.F., a sparking-plug tester, has been mentioned in dispatches for devotion to duty and maintaining a high standard of efficiency.

ACT. MATRON EFFIE TOWNEND, Q.A.I.M.N.S., awarded the R.R.C. for distinguished services in connexion with the evacuation of British wounded from Tobruk in a hospital ship. She has helped to look after hundreds of wounded in the Mediterranean, displaying remarkable devotion to duty.

LADY JUNE HOBSON, lady superintendent of the St. John Ambulance Brigade, Burma, awarded M.B.E. for her splendid services during the Japanese bombing of Rangoon. She is a daughter of the 7th Earl of Carrick.

MARGARET M. CANGLEY, awarded the B.E.M. A stewardess, she was twice a torpedoed victim. She attended wounded in a lifeboat, helped to look after passengers, giving a splendid example of courage when her ship was shelled by a German submarine. Her home is in Victoria, Australia.

Photos, British Official: Crown Copyright; Wright and Logan, Daily Mirror, Planet News, Keystone Hay Wrightson

How Montgomery Captured the Mareth Line

"In the battle that is now to start," said General Montgomery in his message to his troops on the eve of the battle against the Mareth Line, "the Eighth Army will destroy the enemy now facing us in the Mareth positions; will burst through the Gabès gap; will then drive northwards on to Sfax, Sousse, and finally to Tunis. We will not stop or let up until Tunis has been captured and the enemy has either given up the struggle or has been pushed into the sea."

In a dramatic interpolation towards the end of his soon-to-be-famous broadcast on March 21, 1943, Mr. Churchill said that he had just heard from General Montgomery that "the Eighth Army are on the move and that he is satisfied with their progress."

Like Montgomery's first great attack at El Alamein, this new offensive was a frontal assault on the most vital sector of Rommel's front. As at El Alamein, too, it was preceded and accompanied by tremendous artillery and air bombardments. Launched on the evening of Saturday, March 20, against the Mareth Line between the sea and the road from Medenine to Gabès, in its initial stages it was reported to be highly successful. On Sunday evening it was stated at Allied Headquarters that the Eighth Army had captured all its preliminary objectives in the face of the most bitter resistance from the Afrika Korps. "Fierce fighting ensued," stated the official communiqué; "operations are still continuing satisfactorily."

On the next day the news continued to be good. The Eighth Army was reported to have smashed a gap in Rommel's first main defence line between the villages of Mareth and Zarat, and through the gap into the bridgehead that had been won General Montgomery was pouring tanks, guns and infantry, British, Dominion, and Indian, under cover of a terrific bombardment. Yet on Wednesday morning, March 24, the Prime Minister found it incumbent upon him to utter a word of warning in the House of Commons. "Much very hard fighting still lies before the British and United States' forces," he said. "The latest information from the Mareth Front shows the Germans by counter-attacks have regained the greater part of the bridgehead which had been stormed, and that their main line of defence in that quarter has been largely restored."

Although the communiqué issued later in the day from Allied Headquarters referred only to fierce fighting in the Mareth area and enemy counter-attacks successfully repulsed, Algiers radio and dispatches from the Press correspondents confirmed that Rommel had succeeded in recapturing most of the terrain gained by the 8th Army in its initial leap forward. How had the bridgehead been lost? Let us go back to the opening of the story.

Attacking by moonlight, British infantry of the 50th Northumbrian Division fought their way across the Wadi Zigzau, a formidable, deep ravine, wide and wet and very difficult for tracked or wheeled vehicles to cross. The Northumberland sappers, however, struggled across under terrific fire and put down a causeway of brushwood and boulders, over which a few tanks and more infantry were got into the bridgehead. Then with nightfall the attack was renewed, and several of the pill-boxes—small fortresses, 20 feet or so in diameter and with walls 5 ft. thick—beyond the ravine were entered, although enemy resistance was not entirely overcome.

Torrents of rain falling during the previous nights turned the wadi into a morass, and the causeway, being under point-blank fire from the enemy's artillery, was continually being broken up. Efforts were made to construct a stronger causeway, so as to enable more tanks and anti-tank guns to be rushed into the bridgehead in readiness for the expected German counter-attack. But before it could be built the 15th Panzers launched an assault on the afternoon of the second day (Monday, March 22). Fighting with magnificent courage and devotion, the men from Northumberland were gradually forced back across the ravine by sheer weight of numbers (*see* page 700). On the southern side were massed a great weight of tanks, guns and men, but these could do nothing to help. That narrow defile, so slippery, so swept by enemy fire, lay in between. So the British withdrew—from the further pill-boxes, then from the other side altogether except for Ksiba Ouest; then that, too, had to be abandoned, such was the absolutely overmastering strength of the enemy. But (as will be seen) the men who died in that bloody ravine had not died in vain.

CONQUERORS' SMILES. Wounded but jubilant are these men of the 8th Army—"the greatest army that has fought in this war anywhere," as American flyers in Tunisia declare. *Photo, British Official: Crown Copyright*

Meanwhile the attackers elsewhere were having better fortune. The Americans at Gafsa pushed on steadily along the road to Maknassy, while a second American force, supported by a French force, made through El Guettar for Gabès. More important still, south of the salt marshes another Allied column, under Lt.-Gen. Freyberg, was developing a threat against Rommel's right flank at El Hamma.

As things turned out it was this column which tipped the scale against Rommel. Shortly before Montgomery opened his main attack he had dispatched Freyberg across the rocky desert in a great turning move. Travelling from Foum Tatahouine by night and lying hid during the day, Freyberg reckoned on March 19 that he had been spotted by Nazi reconnaissance planes, so all the next day he marched and attacked that night, driving a wedge into the German defences north of the Matmata hills. When the bridgehead at Wadi Zigzau had to be abandoned on March 23, General Montgomery decided to switch the main attack from the Mareth Line to the flank where Freyberg was making such good progress. So reinforcements and supplies were rushed to the New Zealand general; for mile after mile the lorries were nose to tail without a break. On Friday, March 26, the newly-arrived forces were put into the line under cover of darkness and the khamsin (hot desert wind) which by good fortune was blowing for once in the enemy's face.

At two in the afternoon the great attack was opened by the R.A.F.'s Kittihawks: a bombing attack was made every thirty seconds for two and a half hours by these heavily-armed fighters, during which over 300 sorties in low-flying bombing and strafing attacks were carried out. At 4 p.m. the artillery opened up and blasted every foot of the enemy's positions. Then the rocky plain became alive with tanks and infantry which had been hidden there. Shermans and Grants were in the van, followed by Crusaders and Valentines. They charged down the road that leads to El Hamma across a saddleback some ten miles wide, crowned by ruins of a two-foot-high wall constructed by the Romans centuries ago. Wrote The Times' Special Correspondent:

"Roaring and lurching over the uneven ground, the mechanized mass moved with awesome slowness in six columns towards the Roman wall across the saddleback. As it neared the gap from the east newly-arrived troops, with tanks and infantry, advanced and wheeled right to face the enemy just out of range.

"As one watched and listened one tried to put oneself in the soul of a German or Italian watching from the other side and imagine the cold horror with which he saw, as shells fell thick round him, and bombs crashed in destruction behind, while the wind blinded and stifled him with its acrid dust, the mighty array of Allied power rolling inexorably against him."

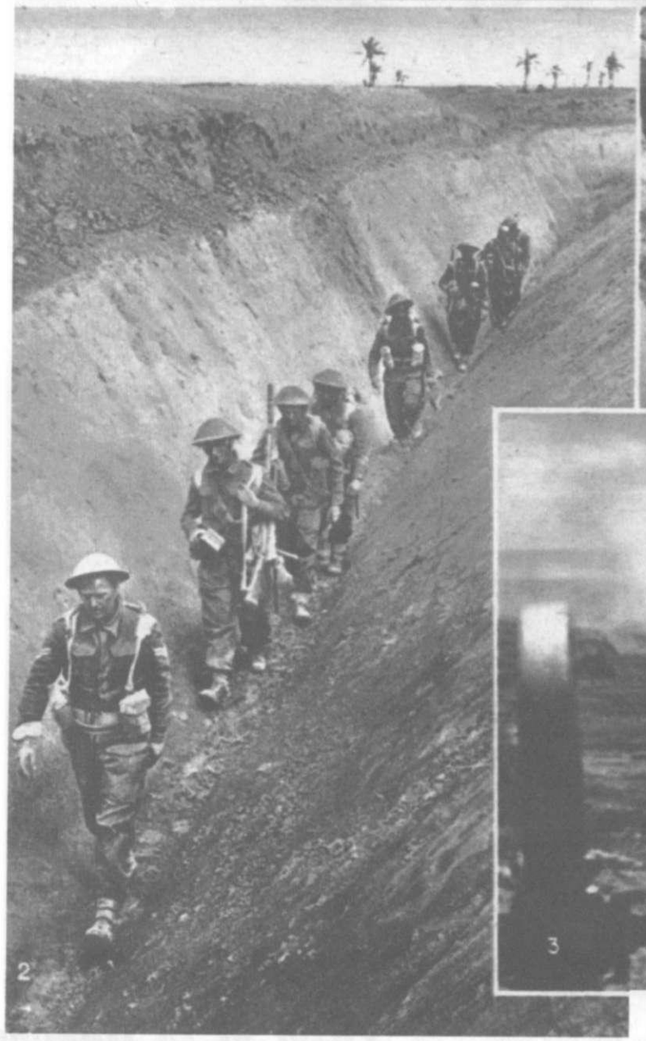
Sweeping across the Roman wall, Freyberg's infantry carried the enemy's positions at the point of the bayonet. Then they stormed the gun positions two miles back. Passing through the infantry, the armour drove steadily on to the outskirts of El Hamma. All night and well into the next day the battle continued. The Italians surrendered in large droves, but the Germans continued to fight with desperate ferocity like rats in a trap—as indeed they were. For their line of retreat lay towards the Mareth Line, and the Mareth Line was now dissolving. Unable to withstand the tremendous weight of the El Hamma blow—his famous Panzers were far too heavily involved at Wadi Zigzau to be switched to the west—Rommel decided to withdraw while the way to the coast remained open. Montgomery was hard on his heels: on that same Sunday (March 28) the Eighth Army occupied Mareth, Toujane and Matmata, taking several thousands of prisoners. At the same time the Americans and French east of El Guettar developed their threat against Rommel's line of retreat.

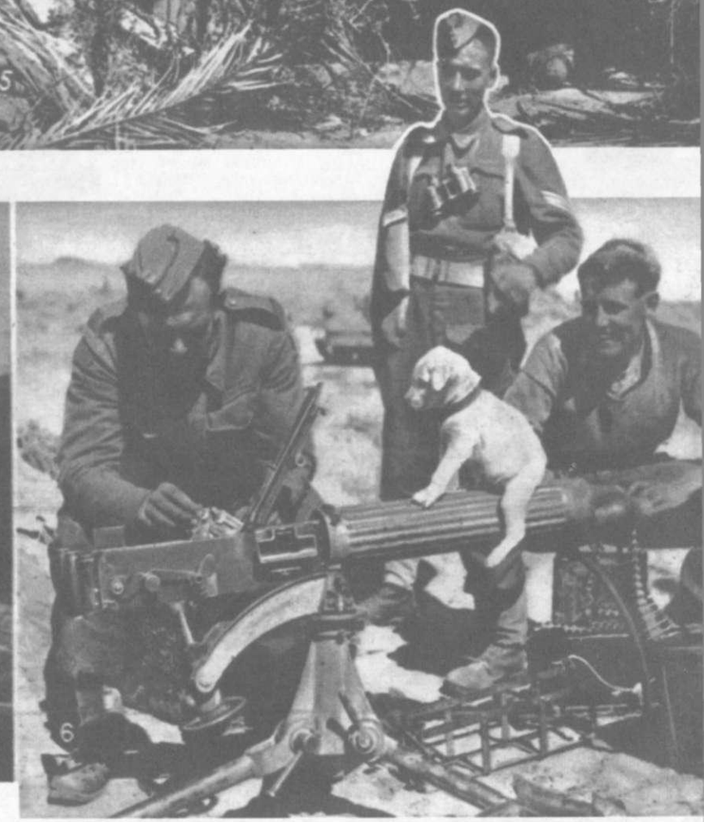
Speaking in the House of Commons on March 30, Mr. Churchill announced that "General Montgomery's decision to throw his weight on to the turning movement, instead of persisting with the frontal attack, has been crowned with success. Another severe defeat has been inflicted by the Desert Army upon the Axis forces they have so long pursued." Then after giving the news that El Hamma had been occupied the previous night and that "our vanguards passed through Gabès this morning," the Prime Minister added that "the decisive break-through of General Freyberg's turning troops had been aided to an extraordinary degree by novel forms of intense air attack in which many hundreds of British aircraft had been simultaneously employed." Without any underrating of the task which still lies before the Allies in Tunisia, the Premier concluded with the remark that "we have every reason to be satisfied with the progress already made by our superior forces and superior equipment under their skilful and resolute commanders."

Photo, Keystone

Victor of El Hamma

One of the heroes of the last war—did he not win his V.C. on the Somme in 1916, was he not wounded nine times, six times mentioned in dispatches, awarded the D.S.O. and two bars?—Major-General Sir Bernard Freyberg, as the Allied C.-in-C. in Crete two years ago and as G.O.C. of the 2nd New Zealand Expeditionary Force since 1939, has won fresh laurels in the present struggle. The most recent of his triumphs was the flank attack by his New Zealanders at El Hamma in Southern Tunisia on March 29, 1943, which compelled Rommel to withdraw from the Mareth Line.





Before the Assault on Mareth

When these photographs were taken the Mareth Line was still in enemy hands, but preparations were afoot which would soon send Rommel once again on the run. In 1, men of a famous Home Counties regiment operating in the coastal sector are using a Service rifle to fire H.E. or smoke grenades from a cup fixed to the muzzle. 2, British infantry passing along an anti-tank ditch constructed by enemy engineers. 3, Rommel's lines at Mareth bombarded by Montgomery's guns.

Photos, British Official: Crown Copyright

Yet Another 8th Army Triumph

Now the attack has begun; the 8th Army is advancing yet again. In the frontal assault on the Mareth Line particularly bitter fighting developed at Wadi Zigzau, a rocky gully—still with a stream in it—which was crossed at night under fierce fire. Casualties were heavy: 4, A first-aid post by the side of the Wadi. The attack was pressed home: 5, British infantry after storming an enemy pill-box. 6, In a peaceful interlude Bonzo is intrigued by the "innards" of a Vicker's machine-gun.

Busy Scenes in Benghazi

Photos, British Official: Crown Copyright

In the years of fierce fighting in the Western Desert the little Libyan port of Benghazi was now in enemy hands, now in British. But almost always it was a target for the bombers, so that its quays were shattered or blown into the water. Now the battle has left it far behind, but still the tide of war flows strongly through it as a most important link in the 8th Army's supply line. These recently-taken photographs show war stores being unloaded in Benghazi harbour.

Clerks of the Weather Now Go By Air

Vitally important is the work of the Meteorological Flights of the R.A.F.—of the men whose job it is to secure the data on which the weather forecasts are based. As will be seen from this article by W. J. BENTLEY, they fly in all weathers—to find out about the weather.

"WE fly in weather which compels even the birds to walk!"

There may have been some slight exaggeration about this remark, made by a Coastal Command meteorological pilot in Iceland, but it certainly conveyed a good idea of the difficulties the "weather pilots" encounter in the Arctic.

Fog and cloud, almost down to ground level, do not stop the "Met" flight aircraft taking off to chart the weather, sometimes on a course stretching hundreds of miles out to sea. During a recent month the weather plane was flying on 28 days of the month.

W.A.A.F. WEATHER FORECASTERS, after intensive scientific training, draw up reports from meteorological bulletins. This photo shows the Stevenson screen which contains a standard thermometer. *Photo, Sport & General*

In the Arctic winter they are dangerous flights—suicidal to any but the most skilful pilots. A water-spout added to the difficulties of one weather pilot recently. He was flying over the sea when the giant column of water suddenly swept up right in front of his machine.

Commanding the Meteorological Flight in Iceland is a young Flight-Lieutenant who was formerly a Ferry Command instructor at Montreal.

WEATHER pilots send in their reports by code and radio to "Central Forecast." This is the nerve-centre of the organization. It is responsible for the collection of the observations which constitute the raw material of the meteorological "factories," and for their distribution throughout the whole organization. It is also responsible for the management of the meteorological stations which make observations and furnish reports from places other than Royal Air Force aerodromes; and, above all, for deriving from the study of the observations and the charts based on them the general deductions about future weather.

These observations are coded in a manner designed to concentrate the information into the shortest possible message. Collection of these messages from a wide network of stations is completed in a few minutes. As soon as it is completed the messages are distributed in one collective message at high speed to all the meteorological stations at the different Commands, Groups, and aerodromes. By this means an instantaneous picture of the meteorological conditions over the whole country is available every hour within a remarkably short time of the observations having been made.

At the Central Station while the observations are being collected and distributed they are also being plotted on blank outline maps, according to a system which enables practically the whole of the information to be shown on a single map. Actually there are several maps, and on some of them only a selection of the information is given in order that a broad picture may be obtained over a wider area. It is from a study of these maps that the forecaster prepares his analysis and his prognosis of the meteorological situation.

THE analysis and forecasts made by the meteorologists at the central station are distributed regularly throughout the day for the information and guidance of the meteorologists at the stations at the various commands.

Our wartime weather charts, the secret information that may be known only to the Services—with the exception of Dover, the Channel weather reports of which are not secret—would be impossible to draw up if weather pilots were not willing to risk their lives in the attempt.

This weather chart is an outline map of the region in which the assistant is working; and shows the coast, certain height contours, and a series of circles which are situated at the positions of stations from which reports are received. Each station is identified by a number which is printed upon the chart and also appears in the message. On this chart the observations from the different stations are plotted. In the British Isles charts of this nature are prepared at intervals of about every three hours seven days a week. The purpose is to produce a weather chart of the area which can be used by the assistant's superior officer for the preparation of aviation forecasts.

Forecasters utilize charts and observations made by assistants to prepare forecasts, and to explain to R.A.F. officers the meteorological situation over the area with which they are concerned, and the changes and developments which will take place in it.

When the observations have been plotted and scrutinized the forecaster must complete the charts, draw the isobars, insert the "fronts" and diagnose the meteorological situation. He must examine the significance of the observations in their relation to each other and of the charts in their relation to the preceding charts, and must arrive at a sound conclusion as to what succeeding charts will be like, because he is concerned not only with the subsequent meteorological conditions at a single place, but with the weather over large areas during substantial periods of time and at different levels.

If the technical work behind the scenes seems dull, remember that a few pilots have to risk their lives so that hundreds of other pilots and air-crews will not be in danger in bad weather.

A YOUNG Flight-Lieutenant told me of some of his adventures over icy seas. "One of the worst flights I ever made took place a few weeks ago," he said. "We flew blind all the way out and back—exactly ten hours of blind flying. When we approached our base we were told that the clouds were right down to 100 ft. over the airfield. I didn't dare to come low because of the mountains, so I climbed and broke out of the top of the clouds at 7,000 ft." He looked for a way down and found it, a few miles away. "It was a hole in the clouds, only about 200 yards across, but it was enough. I spiralled down in tight turns and saw the runways of another airfield below."

Sometimes "weather spotters" are able to prevent other aircraft running into danger. Only a short time ago a "Met" pilot, 200 miles out to sea, found heavy cloud and squalls approaching Iceland at 50 m.p.h. He signalled base, and all the aircraft were immediately recalled. The last returned only a few minutes before the squalls arrived.

WEATHER PILOTS (see accompanying text) climb to 25,000 ft. twice a day over Britain, taking readings of the humidity, temperatures and barometric pressures. The men here shown in the contact office keep in touch with the pilot, and in bad weather inform him how and where to land. *Photo, Keystone*

VIEWS & REVIEWS

Of Vital War Books

by Hamilton Fyfe

Two queries disturb the minds of a great many people. Can we win the war against Germany by breaking through its Home Front as we did last time; and, if so, can that break through be accomplished by means of bombing?

I say "as we did last time," because I think there is no doubt the Kaiser's armies could have gone on fighting much longer than they did if the mass of the nation had not shown very clearly they had had enough. Military opinion on our side—not British only, but American and French also—was that fighting might go on for the best part of another year. Balfour based on this his public statement that there would have to be a 1919 campaign. Northcliffe built on it his private remark in October 1918 that the war was not near its end. It was the collapse on the "German Home Front" that settled the matter. A book by a well-known German exile just published with that title (Gollancz, 10s. 6d.) is therefore of great interest, although it records events and moods and opinions only up to the middle of last year.

Dr. W. W. Schütz has been able to compile a volume crammed with evidence that numbers of Germans were at that time losing faith in the Nazis; that those who had always been opposed to them were doing what they could to make their opposition effective; that certain high Catholic ecclesiastics were worried about Nazi attacks on their Church (though not apparently about the cruelties perpetrated in occupied countries and on Jews); that the heavy losses in Russia had caused doubts even as to the wisdom of the Fuehrer; and that efforts were being made all the time by Goebbels and his gang of propagandists to persuade their dupes to hold on.

OFTEN these efforts throw a comical light on the belief so general not many years ago, that the Germans were the best-educated people in the world. Education is seen to have had in their case the result of making them utterly stupid and sheep-like. Here is an illustration. In order to counteract the depression caused by the success of the Russian offensive during the winter of 1941-42 and the damage to Hitler's popularity which this entailed, a sudden boosting of Frederick the Great was started. Why? Because "Old Fritz" was often defeated, often seemed to be beaten, but came up on top in the end! That showed the very low estimate the Nazis had of German intelligence. But this estimate was, according to Dr. Schütz, too low.

The Home Front proved a strangely unwilling audience to the High Priests of the latest Nazi myth. It was rapidly swallowed up by the immense dry sand-dunes of public distrust, a genuine wave of depression and a longing for peace. This wave was bound to reach even Hitler's sacred person. No artistry of Goebbels could shelter Hitler the man, and all those round him, from the questions, doubts, and the silent, still silent, demands of the people.

Goebbels knew what effect the comparison between his chief and the king who is infamous in history as one of the worst of double-crossers was having, but he was "too clever, too cautious, too sly" to take the bull by the horns. The organ of the S.S. (the Black Guard) and the Gestapo jumped in with both feet. It declared that Hitler must not be thought of as a modern version of Siegfried in the Nibelungen Lied. This comparison had been insisted on by Nazi propaganda for years, but it was all wrong. Hitler was not Siegfried, the noble, stainless knight. He was a reincarnation of the villain of the piece—of Hagen, who "defended himself against fate without any consideration for what mankind regards as inviolable and sacred. Hagen in pursuing his aims used all methods, treason if necessary. He showed no mercy to his enemies, nor to himself. Thus he was true to the highest conception of the German heroic ideal."

Will Our Bombs Break Germany?

Here we have the harvest of German education, which warped history and distorted legend to suit the political needs of the hour. It had the effect of making a few crazily ingenious (recollect the theory these few put forward that British people endured bombing because they got some sort of sexual kick out of danger to life!), and of turning the mass into nit-wits liable to be taken in by almost any nonsense their rulers might put over to them, even when that nonsense directly contradicted what they had been told before. But it seems they were at any rate puzzled by the Frederick the Great rubbish, and so even greater rubbish had to be evolved by the Black Guard to counter that puzzlement.

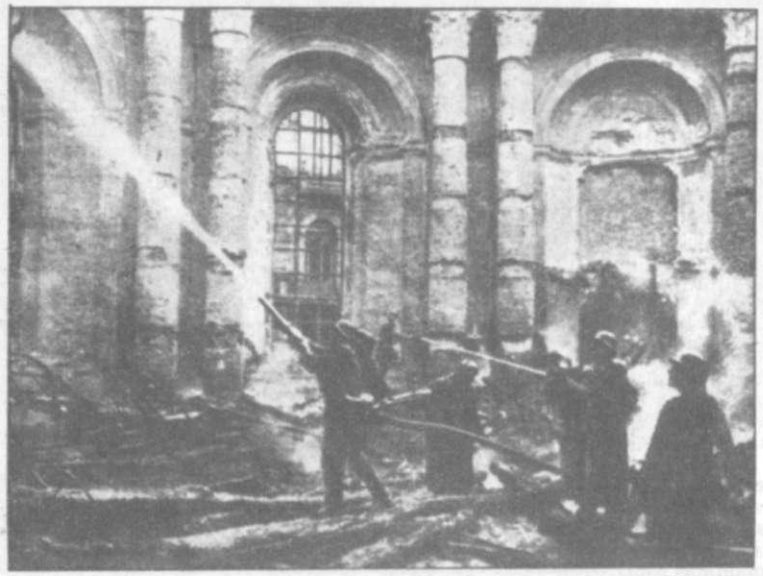
Again, it seems to us incredible that a nation should allow a man like Goering, who has been proved utterly false in his assurances ("German cities can never be bombed") and utterly incompetent in his actions, to retain authority and power. In his new book Is Bombing Decisive? (Allen and Unwin, 5s.) the clever Czech writer, Capt. F. O. Miksche, gives an example of Goering's ineptitude. Taken in by the predictions of an Italian general (Douhet), he embraced the theory that Britain could be decisively beaten by the German Air Force. This theory he put into practice in 1940. Hitler believed in it, and promised that our cities should be "erased." Yet, when this promise was made to look silly, neither Hitler nor the German people had the sense to sack Goering, though, if Capt. Miksche is right, Hermann has never been really Commander-in-Chief of the Luftwaffe since. He "only functions in the capacity of a party supervisor in the aeroplane industry and the Luftwaffe." But he still keeps the title and presumably draws the pay.

WHAT does Capt. Miksche say about the possibility of breaking the German Home Front by bombing? He says it cannot be done. The Germans learned from their experience in the Battle of Britain that "the bombing of towns has no decisive effect, and that such operations are only useful in proportion to their high cost if they can be exploited by the surface forces," that is, on the ground and at sea. For the true aim in war is the destruction of the enemy's living force, and, even if the German masses' will to resist could be broken by bombing, they could not, Dr. Schütz and Capt. Miksche tell us, stop the war as they did in 1918.

There are in Germany, Dr. Schütz calculates, over a million well-equipped men in key positions, stationed at strategic points, controlling all means of communication. They make revolution impossible. As for the Army, it is controlled by ten determined Nazis among every hundred privates, these ten having agents of the Gestapo to look after them! That disposes of any chance to mutiny. In Capt. Miksche's view, the German Home Front means a "police system to keep careful watch on the people and a well-organized propaganda to continuously influence them, also the S.S. divisions to suppress them with armed strength in an emergency." If we relied on bombing to force the Germans to rise against their rulers—which, however, we do not—we should be deluding ourselves.

We delude ourselves equally, however (we are warned by Capt. Miksche), if we believe Air Marshal Sir Arthur Harris when he says that "by bombing we can beat Germany," meaning we can do it by destroying fifty or sixty German industrial towns. For the Nazis have been "feverishly organizing new industries, making use of the occupied parts of the Soviet Union, building new factories in Prague, Pilsen, Maribor, and other places, compelling the Hungarian's to work for their war machine, and all of these prospective targets lie out of the effective range of our aviation."

Capt. Miksche's book is an answer to Alexander Seversky, who maintained that the War could be won in the air; there is too much Seversky in it. But it is a contribution of real value to the debate on the best and quickest way to force on the Nazis that unconditional surrender which the Casablanca Conference declared to be essential. Close cooperation between the Air Force and the Army, and of both with the Navy, is what Capt. Miksche, and all other reasonable folk, believe in. There is no doubt we should have done better if we had had this close cooperation from the start.



RAID DAMAGE IN BERLIN. Now at long last Berlin is receiving punishment such as the Nazis have inflicted so often on the cherished cities of other peoples. This photograph shows Berlin A.R.P. workers striving to overcome a fire engendered by R.A.F. bombs. *Photo, Keystone*

After Two Years the Yugoslavs Still Fight On

IN THE MOUNTAINOUS HEART OF YUGOSLAVIA the Germans and Italians are hard put to it to hold their own against the bands of patriots who refuse to accept the defeat of two years ago as final. 1, German soldiers taking to an unknown destination, and fate, Bosnian women suspected of having carried food and ammunition to their menfolk resisting the invader. 2, German storm-grenadiers, employing local oxen for transport, move through a burning Bosnian village. 3, Nazi soldiers captured by Serbian "chetniks." *Photos Keystone, Associated Press*

THE WAR IN THE AIR

by Capt. Norman Macmillan, M.C., A.F.C.

THE United Nations' air forces engaged in the Tunisian war zone are now referred to as though they have been divided into a strategic and a tactical force. Here, at last, is the logical application of air power. Probably it has not before been possible to establish the two divisions of air power in the South Mediterranean, simply because there were not enough aircraft to make it feasible to do so. That it has become possible now is the best evidence that the output of the aircraft factories of Britain and America has put a greatly augmented air power into the hands of the commanders in the Mediterranean theatre of war.

Hitherto, one force has had to do both duties as best it could ; and it cannot always have been easy to apportion to each the strength of aircraft the commander would have liked to use.

Until recently the tactical force has had to come first, and ever since General Auchinleck's withdrawal to El Alamein in June 1942 the main air strength in North Africa has been devoted to the winning of the battles on the ground. It is probable that history will accord to the air its due place in the successes which were achieved. At the moment the fighting is of a nature too cohesive to be dissected. The Eighth Army has shown itself to be a precise-working machine, employing air, sea, and submarine collaboration in a manner so dovetailed into its own operational needs as to make the working of all three Services a combined operation.

The first application of divided tactical and strategic air power was the creation in the autumn of 1917 of the Independent 41st Wing of the Royal Flying Corps which was sent to Ochey in north-eastern France under Lieut.-Colonel Cyril Newall (now Marshal of the R.A.F. and Governor-General of New Zealand). This force was later called the Independent Air Force, and its command was taken by Major-General H. M. Trenchard (now Viscount Trenchard) in June 1918.

The independence of the air force from the other Services was recommended by General Smuts in his Memorandum to the Cabinet in 1917, together with its employment in a strategic capacity in addition to its normal use as a tactical weapon. It is therefore the more fitting that the greatest example of this combined use of air power to a common end should have been displayed in North Africa, the theatre of war within which Field-Marshal Smuts' Parliament sanctioned the earliest employment of South African forces, including the South African Air Force, after the cleaning up of the Italians in north-east Africa.

In North Africa this logical development of the employment of air power has been carried to a nicely-balanced state, firstly, by the collaboration of the United States air forces, and, secondly, by the appointment of an air generalissimo (which Air Chief Marshal Sir Arthur Tedder is) to co-ordinate the air operations of the whole recently created Mediterranean Command.

The organization of this Mediterranean zone, and the part allotted to air power therein, are of more than passing interest. For it would appear that it is from having got things right at the top first, so that the organization was smooth and the allocation of responsibility precise, that all subsequent success has derived.

MOUNTING Power of Allied Air Force in Mediterranean

IT may not be disclosed until after the War ; but do we see again here the guiding mind of Field-Marshal Smuts, who came to London last autumn ? That is quite probable. And the arrangement no doubt was completed and strengthened between President Roosevelt and Mr. Churchill at their Casablanca conference. Today, the combined air power of the United Kingdom, the Dominions, and the United States sweeps over the Mediterranean with irresistible force, and with mounting power. The forces at the command of the Luftwaffe cannot compare with the superb air force which has been created by the United Nations in the Mediterranean. The Italian Regia Aeronautica must have a sense of being overwhelmed by the air power opposed to Italy. Their aircraft are inferior to ours, and they are far fewer.

ROMMEL MEETS KESSELRING somewhere in the Western Desert. This excerpt from a captured German newsreel gives a close-up of the redoubtable commander of the German Afrika Korps (right) and his fellow field-marshal who commands the Luftwaffe in the Mediterranean. *Photo, Ministry of Information*

In Sicily, Field-Marshal Albert Kesselring (smiling Albert of the Luftwaffe), German Air Commander in the South, must feel anxiety mount as the air power opposed to his grows ever greater. He was one of the advocates in Germany of the use of the Luftwaffe to quell all opposition in an enemy, by terror bombing in addition to tactical and strategic bombing. He lost (with Field-Marshal Sperrle) the Battle of Britain when he was matched against Sir Hugh Dowding and the boys of Britain's Fighter Command. Now he is matched against Sir Arthur Tedder. Will he fare better ? I doubt it. And so must he. For now he faces an air arm far stronger than the comparatively tiny fighter force that hurled back the German geschwadern over Britain.

It is said that Kesselring and Rommel are personal enemies. If this be true it will not help either in the storm which is breaking over them.

WHAT are we going to achieve in the air when the Axis forces are driven from Africa ? The cordon will have been drawn about the Axis forces and they will have been contained for the first time since the War began. We shall then have complete air protection for passage of ships through the Mediterranean. With that supply line secure under air cover it will be possible to augment the rate of supply to all Middle East and Eastern theatres of war. We shall be better able to aid Russia at the southern end of her front. We shall be better placed to take the offensive against the Japanese invaders of Burma.

We shall possess air bases along the whole coastline of North Africa (except Spanish Morocco) from which we can attack by air Axis-held Europe at any point at will.

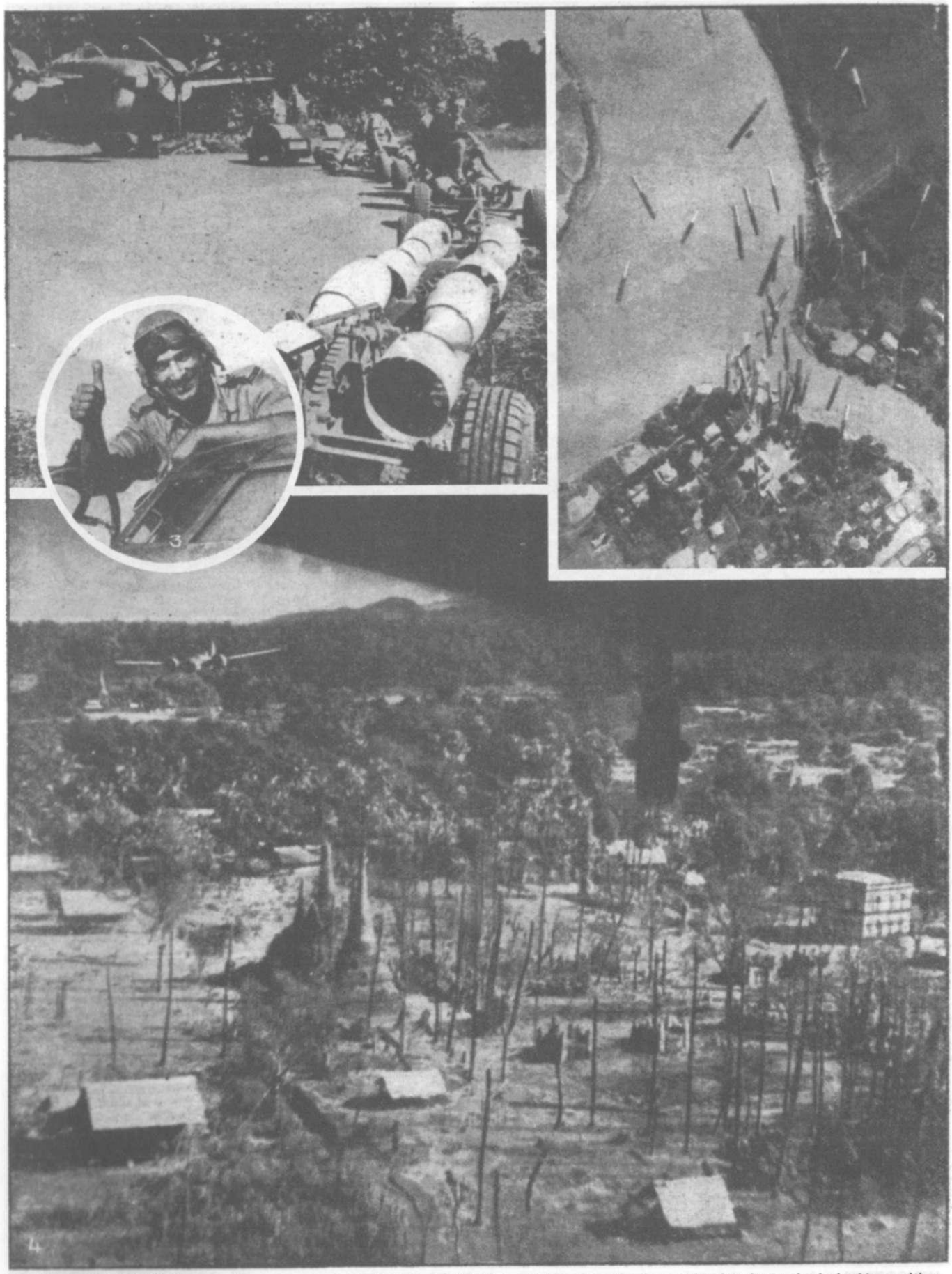
We shall be in a position to attack Europe across the narrow bridge of the Mediterranean between Tunisia and Sicily, if we wish to do so, but we shall also have a range of choice as great as that we can now make in relation to the western coast of Europe.

The Axis forces will have a long-spread-out line to defend, in Russia, along the Mediterranean, and facing the Atlantic and the Arctic Ocean, of about 8,000 miles.

It will then become possible to apply against that great area the lessons we have learned about tactical and strategic air power working to a common end, not in a single theatre of war, as in Tunisia now, but against Axis-held Europe as a whole. It should be possible to co-ordinate the Russian effort, which hitherto has necessarily been fought in isolation, within the grand framework of the master strategy. And for this purpose our air power can be concentrated at the tactically decisive point, or points.

DIRECTORS OF ALLIED AIR POWER in North Africa. Taken on Castel Benito airfield after the 8th Army's triumphant entry into adjacent Tripoli, this photograph shows three of the men who were among the chief architects of the Allied victory. Left to right: Air Vice-Marshal Sir Arthur Coningham, General Carl Spaatz, U.S.A.A.F., and Air Chief Marshal Sir Arthur Tedder. *Photo, British Official: Crown Copyright*

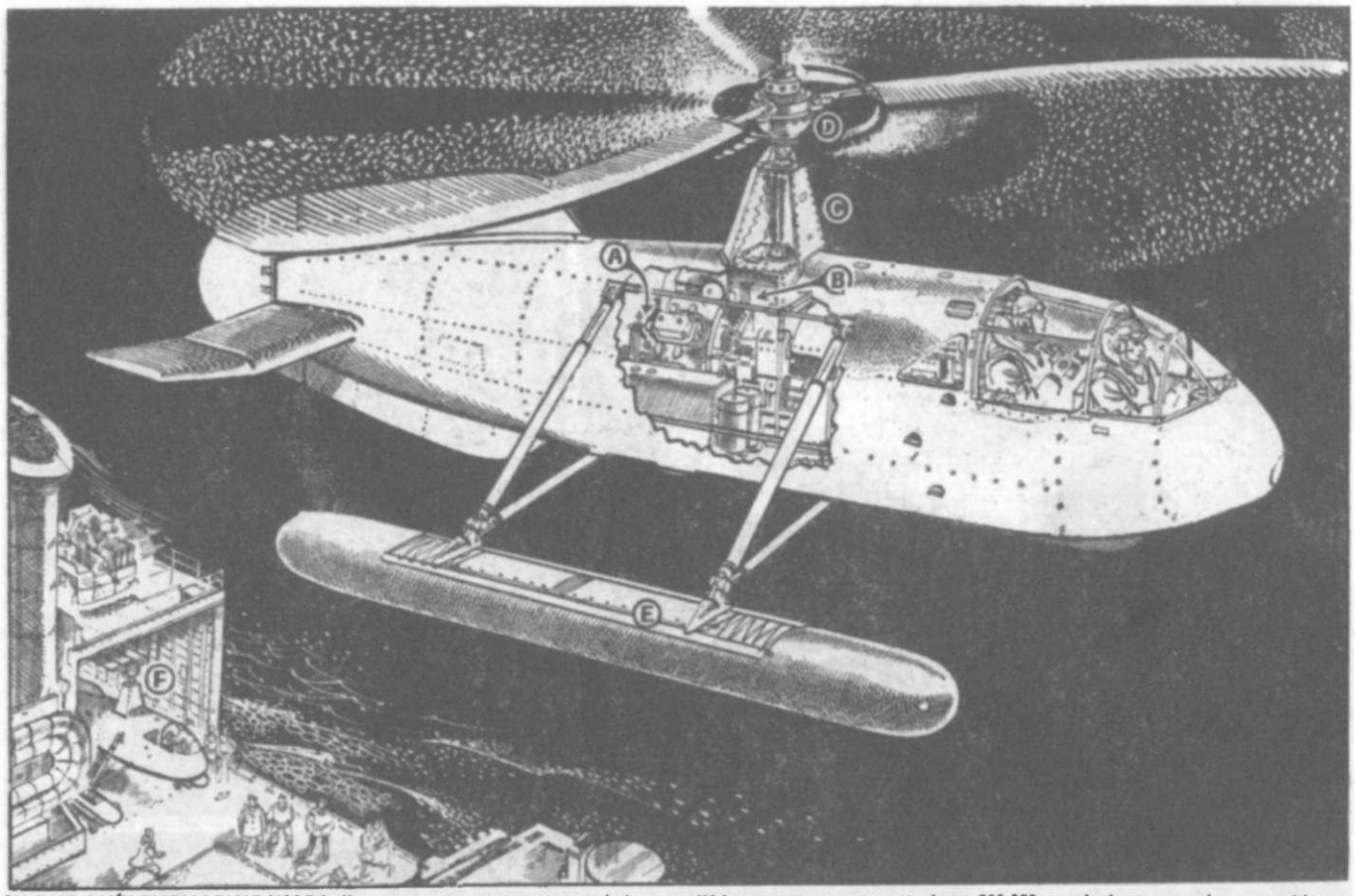
Allied Aircraft Hammer the Japs in Burma



R.A.F. AND U.S. PLANES are playing a vigorous part in the Burmese fighting. 1, R.A.F. armourers ride on a bomb-train carrying its load to a waiting plane at an Indian airfield. 2, Allied aircraft drop a shower of incendiaries on Jap positions in the Taungdaung area. 3, Indian pilot of a Hurricane gives the "thumbs-up" sign on returning from a sortie. The I.A.F.'s 1943 target is 10 squadrons equipped with the latest aircraft. 4, R.A.F. Blenheims swoop over a Jap base in the Myitkyina valley.

Photos, British Official: Crown Copyright

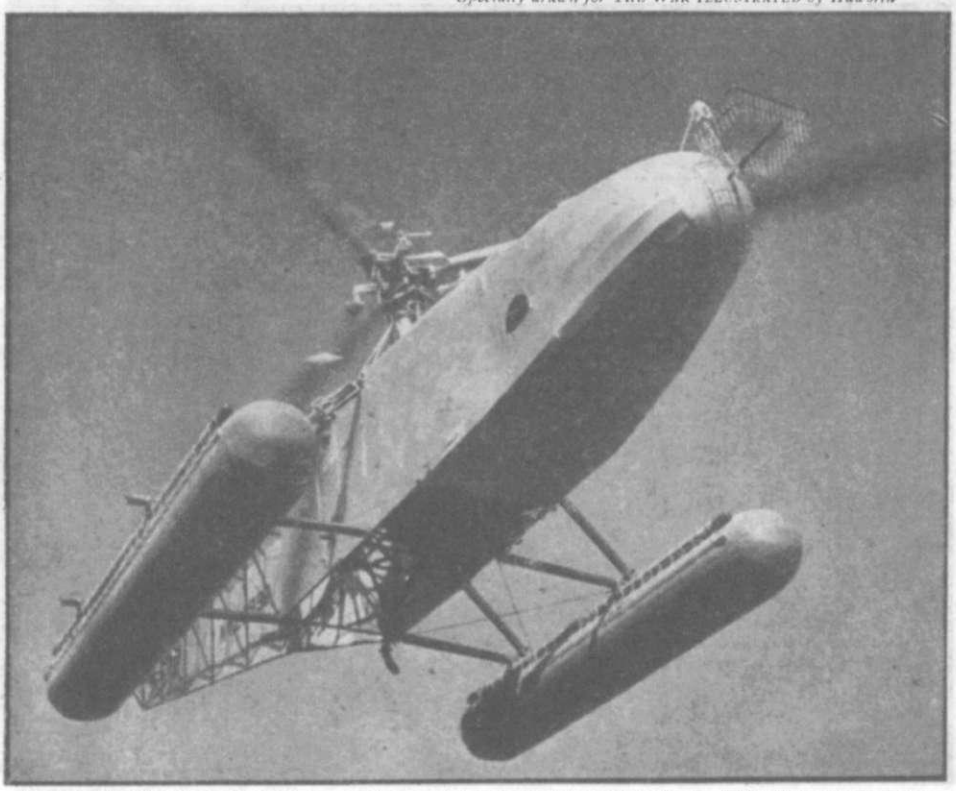
Helicopters Should Be Useful Against U-Boats



IN THE ANTI-SUBMARINE WAR helicopters are seen to possess obvious advantages, chief among them being the small space they require when taking off and landing. By using a revolving rotor the element of "lift" is obtained when most or all of the forward movement has ceased. Normal aircraft need speeds ranging from about 40 m.p.h. to provide sufficient turbulent air over the wing surfaces to keep the craft airborne.

Here in this drawing is shown a composite craft making a vertical take-off from the deck of a warship. The engine (A) drives the three-armed lifting screw or rotor at about 200-250 revolutions per minute, making a circle 30 ft. in diameter. The gear box (B) takes the drive through the shaft (C) to the rotor-head (D), which contains the pitch-changing mechanism. The pilot, by means of a control column, can change direction even sideways, and, in some cases, backwards, by adjusting the pitch of the rotors and use of rudder and tail planes, etc. At (E) are seen the pneumatic floats suitable for deck or sea landing. A helicopter with rotor arms folded, and stowed in its hangar, is shown at (F).

Specially drawn for THE WAR ILLUSTRATED *by Haworth*



HELICOPTERS can hover over the precise spot where they intend to land. This photograph shows one of these aircraft preparing to descend. The Vought-Sikorsky helicopter is a wingless, two-engined, two-seater machine which can fly forwards, backwards and sideways. It can operate from any type of terrain.

Photo, Associated Press

BRITAIN has placed orders in America for helicopters, announced Capt. H. Balfour, Under-Secretary of State for Air, in the House of Commons on March 11. These aircraft, he went on to state, would be employed to help protect our shipping against U-boat attacks. Capt. Balfour's announcement followed reports from the U.S.A. that the Vought-Sikorsky helicopter was being produced in quantities for service tests for the American Army.

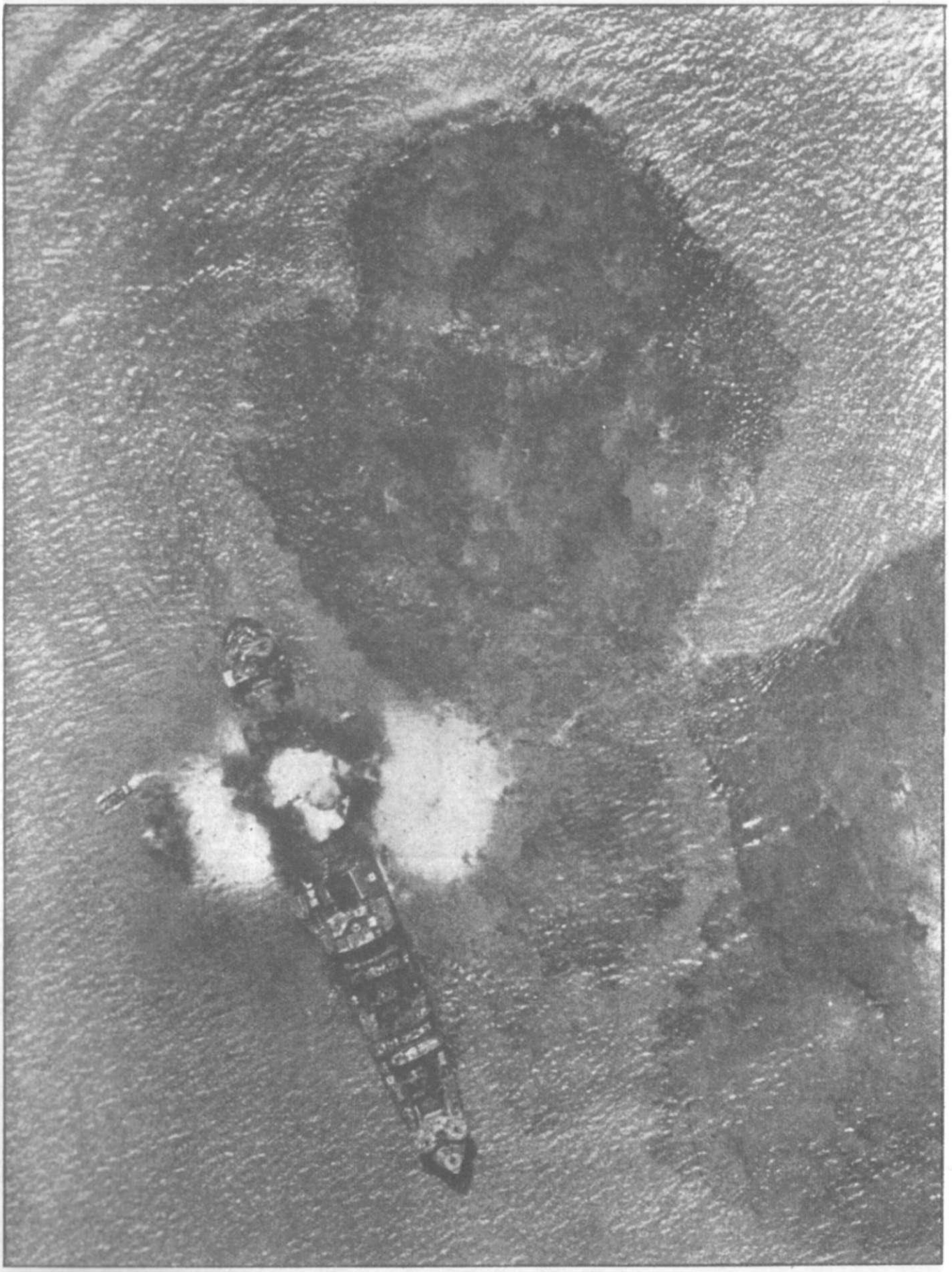
The U.S. Naval authorities have also decided to use this aircraft as an anti-submarine weapon owing to the facility with which it can take off and land vertically from the deck of a ship. The helicopter can carry depth charges or bombs, which it drops with a hundred per cent accuracy.

Designers have long been attracted to rotating-wing aircraft, that is, the type with thin flexible blades rotating on a vertical axis. The helicopter works on different principles from those of the autogyro. It does its flying by means of its rotor, the angle of whose blades can be altered to fly the machine in any direction of the compass, in addition to a rising or descending angle.

The present version of the helicopter is the result of more than 30 years' work on the problem of direct-lift aircraft, begun in Russia in 1910 by Major Sikorsky, and continued in America after the last war. In France also Bréguet carried out numerous experiments in helicopter research. Model experiments confirmed results obtained by the Chinese hundreds of years before.

The Vought-Sikorsky helicopter has extraordinary manoeuvrability, and is able to stop its forward travel in a matter of seconds

Right on the Target—Direct Hit by U.S. Bombers



BULL'S EYE ON A JAP SHIP deprived enemy forces in Burma of badly needed supplies. The vessel was steaming across the Bay of Bengal, south of Rangoon, when she was spotted by U.S.A.A.F. aircraft. Swooping over the 7,000-ton ship, the American planes dived low and dropped their bombs. This remarkable photograph, taken just after a big explosion had occurred, shows boats pulling away and another swung out on the davits waiting to be lowered as the crew take to the water.

Photo, British Official

THE HOME-FRONT

by E. Royston Pike

IN the first three days of September 1939 a million and a quarter schoolchildren and children under school age, mothers and expectant mothers, blind, cripples, mental defectives, hospital patients and "helpers" were evacuated from the most vulnerable areas of our great cities into the countryside. In the reception areas the people as a whole met this summary invasion of their homes with good will and helpfulness; but hardly had the billeting been completed when the country rang with accusations against some of the mothers and children. Letters to newspapers, reports to the Ministry of Health, and speeches in Parliament voiced a disgust which had in it an element of horror. The "submerged tenth," as the slum-dwellers used to be called in the days of General Booth and that other Booth who studied and described the life and labour of the Londoners of the 'nineties, came to the surface, revealing a foul beastliness which had never been suspected or realized save by those, health visitors and the like, whose duties took them into the lowest dens of London's East End, the dock areas of Mersey and Tyne, the teeming tenements of Leeds and Birmingham and Manchester.

AFTER three months 88 per cent of the mothers had returned to their homes, taking with them 86 per cent of their young children; but they left behind them a fearful memory. Against some of the mothers and young children the complaints were extraordinarily intense and bitter. To quote a passage from Our Towns: A Close Up (Oxford University Press, 5s.), a recently-published book which takes the lid off the slums as never before, one written in such plain language that a spade is called a nit-comb:

> It was said that they were dirty, verminous, idle and extravagant; that they could not hold a needle and did not know the rudiments of cooking and housecraft, and that they had no control over their young children, who were untrained and animal in their habits. Some of these women were said to be foul-mouthed, bullying and abusive, given to drinking and frequenting public houses, insanitary in their habits and loose in their morals.

WITH such mothers what can one expect of the children? Much was forgiven the unaccompanied schoolchildren, and the sight of them filled many hostesses with a burning zeal to improve their condition.

> Dirty and verminous, ill-clad and ill-shod (some had never had a change of underwear or any night-clothes and had been used to sleeping on the floor), suffering from scabies, impetigo, and other skin diseases, refusing to eat wholesome food, but clamouring for fish-and-chips, sweets and biscuits, refusing to go to bed at reasonable hours, destructive and defiant, foul-mouthed, liars and pilferers—these are some of the charges in the indictment against the future parents of our race. Some parents were said to have deliberately sent their children away ill-clad in order to get free clothing, to send them pocket-money, sweets, and "comics" instead of the clothing they needed, and to descend, often accompanied by relatives, for week-end visits which were an imposition and a scourge, expecting their whole party to receive free hospitality. The country rang with such accusations . . .

Back in their old quarters, these appalling dregs of humanity, who in their habits put the animals to shame, have aggravated the enormous difficulties presented by bombing, blackout, and large-scale transference of labour. At their last meeting the Education Committee of the London County Council learned of the uphill struggle encountered in the re-establishment of school facilities.

> ". . . For many months children spent nights regularly in public shelters, under conditions which made it difficult, if not impossible, to observe reasonable standards of cleanliness of body and clothing, and of hygiene generally. Moreover, the damage by air attacks to houses, schools and other buildings made it necessary to improvise accommodation which normally would never have been accepted as reasonable for living and for schooling. Rationing of clothes, soap, and towels makes difficulties in the schools where in peacetime very useful work was done in the making and providing of garments for schoolchildren, work which was both educational and of immense assistance to the families concerned." Then many of the schools are still in the occupation of Civil Defence organizations. Yet while the children who have returned from evacuation show an all-round improvement in well-being and vitality (though they are often behindhand in their book-learning), the children who have remained in London show (it is claimed) no signs of physical or mental deterioration.

In London, as elsewhere, the schools are putting up a tremendous fight against the evils which war has brought in its train, and the evils which, alas, were carried over from peacetime. Few are aware of the difficulties which have to be faced (hence the importance of such books as Our Towns).

> One speaker at the L.C.C. meeting revealed that he had just found a school where the mistress was trying to get every child to bring a handkerchief to school, even if it were only a bit of rag. Whereupon Miss Agnes Dawson said that years ago she herself had "made it a point to give every child in my school a handkerchief as a Christmas present, with her name woven into the corner. They didn't last long, it is true, but it was an experiment worth trying." Another speaker, Mrs. E. M. Lowe, in a plea to cut the cant and face facts, declared that you can inculcate clean living by the age of fourteen, but you can't teach good housekeeping by that age.

YOUNG FARMERS' EXAMINATION arranged by the Berkeley Hunt Agricultural Society, was successfully revived this year. For the first time there were two women candidates, one of whom is here seen estimating the value and weight of a sheep, under the watchful eye of a judge. *Photo, E. W. Tattersall*

THAT many of the young women of England are completely ignorant of housewifery was one of the criticisms made by a W.A.A.F. officer at a meeting of the Women's Adjustment Board Committee in London on March 5.

> "I have seen thousands of women coming into the Forces," said Squadron Officer W. Wood, "who have never lit a fire in their lives. It is appalling that our young women of seventeen and eighteen should not know the elementary rules of housewifery and cooking. The extent of their cookery is to open a tin and make a cup of tea." The Services, she went on, are doing good work in teaching girls to mend their underclothes and stockings, and to foster standards of cleanliness. "It is astonishing how many weeks some of these girls can go without washing," she commented . . .

Letters published in the Press, so far from resenting, bore out the allegations.

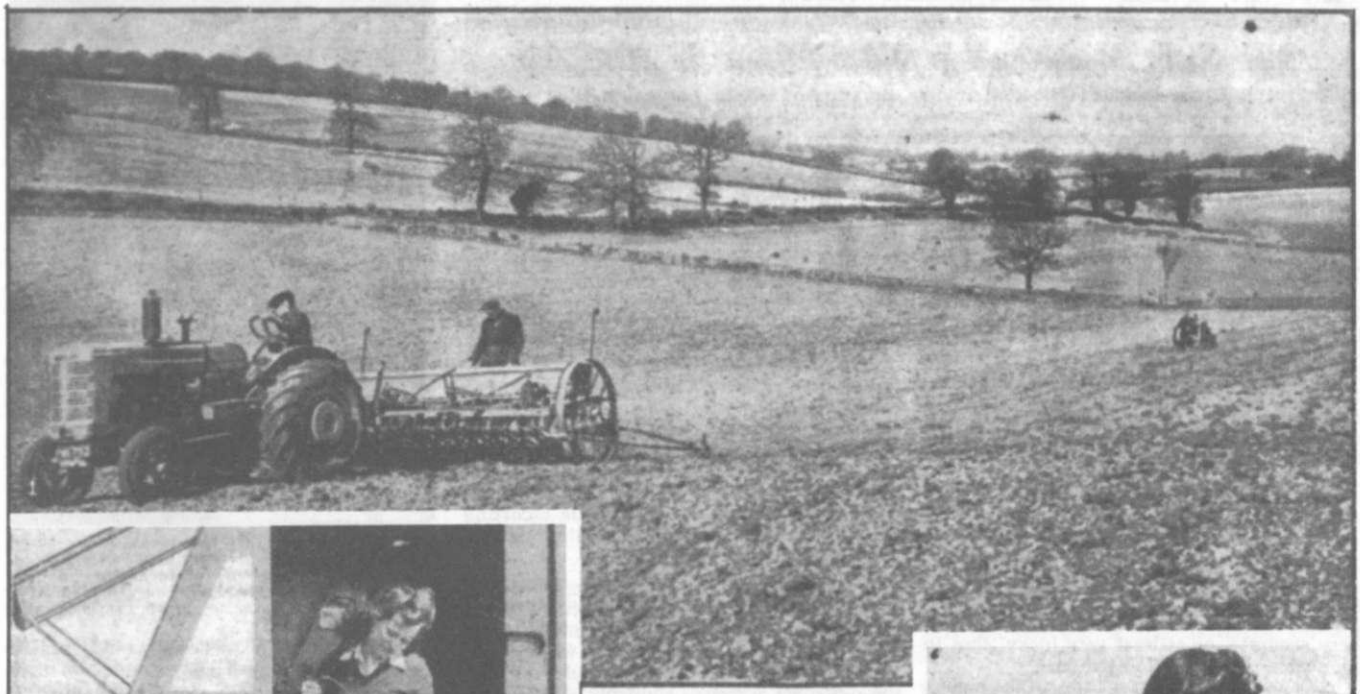
> Thus one printed in The News Chronicle reads: "The washing conditions are frightful: just six grubby-looking baths and two sinks in a hut about a hundred yards from the house for about five hundred W.A.A.F.s; these are only open at certain hours, and we have to get dressed in the morning without washing and also go to bed unwashed. You can imagine how sweet-tempered that makes me."

FOR the most part it is women who are bearing the burden and heat of the day on the home front: it was a band of gallant women who, for instance, obtained the information for Our Towns. It is all the more surprising, therefore, that Mrs. Mavis Tate, M.P., should have had to fight so long and so hard for what must seem to be a stroke of elemental justice—the granting to women who are injured in air raids the same compensation as is paid to men.

> Following the division reported in our page 410 the Government set up a House of Commons Select Committee to consider the matter; and having received the Committee's report, Sir Walter Womersley, Minister of Pensions, announced in the House on April 7 that the Government had accepted its recommendations. The rate of injury allowance and disablement pension for women would be raised to the men's rate; and, moreover, non-gainfully occupied persons of both sexes would have their rates increased to those hitherto paid to gainfully-occupied men. Those most benefited by this latter provision are the housewives. Under the old order a housewife hurt by bomb-blast while doing her duty in her home received only 16s. 4d. weekly compensation, whereas if she had been injured while doing duty as a part-time warden she would have received 28s. Under the new order men and women will each receive 35s. (plus 8s. 9d. for a married man). Well might Mrs. Tate be jubilant over the removal of "this great injustice that has been suffered by women."

DOWN the Mile End Road rumbled a tractor-plough, driven by a girl in the uniform of the Women's Land Army. To the People's Palace it went, to a great East End rally—part of the campaign to enlist 60,000 voluntary helpers for holiday-work on the farms in the Home Counties. Camps are being established in the country, each equipped with main water and modern sanitation, a bed for every worker. Men and women and boys and girls over 16 are required; pay is 1s. an hour for men, 10d. for women, and 8d. for the youngsters, and the cost of living at the camps will be 4s. a day. Another food "flash" is that all the King's horses, including the famous greys seen in the Coronation procession and at Ascot, are to help this year to bring in the harvest on the Windsor estate.

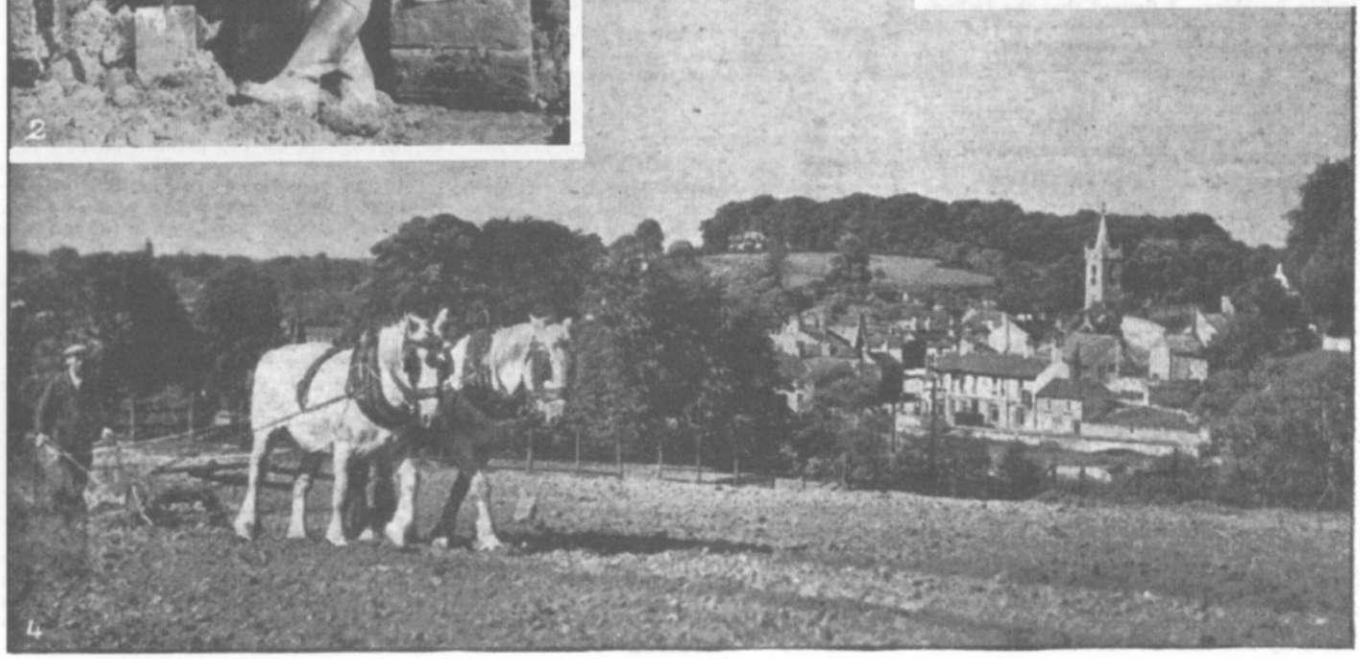
Plough that We May Reap the Victory Harvest!



TWO out of three of Britain's population are now fed on home-grown food, but Mr. R. L. Hudson, Minister of Agriculture, is urging us to do even better. In March 1943 he demanded that Britain's ploughing acreage of 600,000 be increased to 1,000,000.

The photographs in this page show how men and women are tackling the drive for food on the home front. 1, A drill sowing barley in a 60-acre field in Herts. It was stated recently that no cereal from the next harvest would be allocated to whisky manufacture. 2, Engaged in reclaiming 6,000 acres of Cheshire marshland by ditching, these Land Girls knock-off for lunch. 3, This member of the W.L.A. wears battledress while tilling the soil. 4, Ploughing a Yorkshire field.

Photos, The Times, Daily Mirror, Fox



I WAS THERE! Eye Witness Stories of the War

Our Sub. Destroyed a Nazi Plane in Mid-Air

Enemy-hunting in the Mediterranean, the submarine Umbra (see page 649) achieved a grand "bag"—including 12 Axis ships sunk, totalling about 49,000 tons, 13 prisoners captured, and credit for the destruction of a Nazi plane. Here is part of the great story, told by the Umbra's commanding officer, Lieutenant S. L. C. Maydon, D.S.O., R.N.

MY submarine was commissioned in August 1941, and our first success was, paradoxically, a disappointment to me. We encountered a very small craft on a very dark night. As soon as the alarm was given I went up on the bridge and, when my eyes became accustomed to the darkness, I thought we were on the trail of a U-boat. It was a small black box-shaped thing that I saw. We fired our torpedoes, and I immediately dived. We waited a bit in case there were other enemy naval craft in the vicinity, then surfaced cautiously.

We dived again, and returned to the spot next day, when we found two survivors on rafts. From one of these we learned the identity of our victim. It was not a U-boat, as I had hoped, but an Italian salvage ship, the Rampino, of 301 tons. The one satisfaction we had was that we must have fired a very accurate, or at least very lucky, shot to hit such a small target in the dark.

We encountered larger prey on the night of June 14-15, 1942—the Italian battle fleet! We saw flares dropped by our aircraft, in line, in the most amazingly accurate manner. On the morning of the 15th I knew the Italian warships were coming in our direction. We stayed on the surface as long as we dared; then we dived, and we could hear the threshing of ships' propellers. When I came to periscope height I saw two battleships, three cruisers and many destroyers. I moved into position to attack, and was within twenty seconds of firing the torpedoes when there was the devil of a noise.

At first we thought it was depth charges. Then we realized that it came from the bombs of our own aircraft attacking the Italian fleet. They were American Liberators, I believe; and the sight that I watched through the periscope was an astonishing one. The sky was filled with tracer shells and there were bomb splashes everywhere on the surface of the water. I was so astonished and fascinated by the sight that the idea of danger just did not occur to me, although we were in the same peril from the bombs as were the Italian warships. I figured that the Italians might come round in a big circle, and I moved into a likely position to intercept them. They did come round, going as fast as ever they could. This time we got off our torpedoes, and obtained one hit at least. We learned later that the battleship we hit was under repair in dock at Taranto for a considerable time.

A TRENTO class cruiser had been hit by a bomb and set on fire. She was blazing well, and we started stalking her. She was protected by three destroyers, circling round her continually as she limped towards the Italian coast. A rather ineffective smoke screen was being put down. We got in fairly close, and then two of the destroyers came in right over us. We had to go away a bit. We came in again, and it was remarkable that although the cruiser was on fire aft there were sailors standing on the forecastle leaning on the rail. We fired two torpedoes, then several depth charges were dropped, but we got clear. That, I think, was the most exciting day I have ever spent. The cruiser sank a few minutes after 10 p.m. I did not see her go down, as my idea was to get away quickly. There was someone, however, who saw our torpedoes hit, and he reported that the cruiser broke up and sank in three minutes.

On August 27, 1942—the first birthday of Umbra—we carried out another attack, on two heavily-escorted enemy supply ships. We sighted them with their attendant destroyers, and I fired my torpedoes when the ships were more or less in line. One was definitely hit, and probably sank. We had twenty-nine depth charges dropped around us that time. The following month we again sighted two enemy vessels, and I had never before seen such a heavy air escort for two merchant ships. I fired a complete salvo of torpedoes, and at least one hit was obtained. The target was seen stopped and down by the stern. Then came counter-attacks by the escorting destroyers, and seventeen depth charges were dropped close to us.

Later we saw that three destroyers had been left behind to go round the damaged merchant ship in an endless circle. The moon came up and the light was good. We worked our way in again, and I dived straight through the destroyer screen. Suddenly there was a heavy explosion. We thought at first of a depth charge. Then we saw that the ship had disappeared. The explosion must have been her blowing up.

ON Dec. 2, 1942, off the Tunisian coast, we saw an Italian collier, going quite slowly. I did not attack immediately, as I hoped something better might be following her. I reckoned that if nothing else came along we should still be able to catch up with her and carry out an attack. Nothing did come, so we went after her, surfaced and attacked with gunfire. With our second shot we severed her main steam-pipe. She came to an abrupt halt, and then we sank her. We picked up an Italian and he told us that some Germans had been on board. We found them—a nice capture of ten. All save one were German air force personnel.

Lt. S. L. C. MAYDON, D.S.O., R.N., commander of H.M.S. Umbra, who describes in this page the splendid achievements of his craft against enemy shipping in the Mediterranean. *Photo, British Official*

One of them, an Austrian, could speak a fair amount of English, so we made him interpreter. Some of the Huns, we gathered, had been in hospital and were going home to Germany on sick leave. Others were in the ordinary course of transfer of duty. They had been waiting in Tripoli for some time for an air passage. They had taken off in a Junkers 52, which had promptly run out of petrol, and they had come down in the sea. They had been picked up by the Italian collier, and then they were picked up again—by us.

A week later we had the good fortune to meet a munitions ship escorted by four aircraft. We fired our torpedoes, obtained a hit, and the ship blew up. When we looked again there were only three escorting planes: and that is how we came to be credited with the destruction of an aircraft. The suggestion is that the fourth was blown up by the force of the explosion of the ammunition ship.

I Rode 'The Weapon That Will Win the War'

This vivid description of aerobatics in one of the world's fastest warplanes—the Mosquito—is condensed from an article by Ronald A. Keith and reprinted here from the February issue of Maclean's, Canada's National Magazine.

THE familiar terrain of Toronto stands on edge and gyrates like a spinning platter. A mighty weight presses on your head and shoulders like an invisible drop hammer. Then your vision clears and a cow barn tilts past the window in a blur of speed.

It could be a horrible dream, but it isn't. It is the exciting reality of flight with Geoffrey de Havilland, Jr., in the Canadian-built Mosquito, one of the swiftest warplanes in the world.

After secret preparations the event had been heralded by a cryptic telegram: "CAN YOU BE AT AIRPORT NEAR TORONTO TO GET INSECT STORY EARLY THURSDAY?" We could. For that "insect" would be one of those deadly "Mosquitoes" which are breeding in this country's warplants and will be rising in swarms to sting the Nazis into frenzies. This bomber, now being manufactured in Canadian plants, has been described by an R.A.F. Air Marshal as "the weapon that will win the war."

As our Mosquito stood on the tarmac its long legs were like slender stilts propped under the long slim belly of the fuselage. The sun sparkled on the plexiglass dome of the cockpit and slanted through the transparent bomb-sighting snout. The plywood body and wings, sheathed in fabric and slicked with silver dope, gleamed like the surface of a hardwood floor, hinting at one of the secrets of the plane's phenomenal speed. It has been claimed that freedom from the thousands of rivet-heads, which mar the metal plane's surface like a rash, adds up to twenty per cent more speed for the same power.

The Merlins were coughing discreetly as they idled; we mounted a ladder to find Geoffrey de Havilland seated at the controls, checking his instruments in the compact two-man cabin. In a chocolate-coloured jacket, white shirt and correct tie he looked more like an alert young businessman in his office than a famous test pilot ready for take-off. Buckling on his aerobatic shoulder harness, which would clamp him firmly to the seat in any position, de Havilland smiled.

"You may buckle yours up if you like, but you really won't need it. She is very gentle in aerobatics," he suggested. We were already busy buckling, also taking some care to check the parachute harness. Its two snap hooks in front were ready to grip corresponding rings on the parachute pack

which lay in a compact bundle on the floor.

The escape hatch too came in for some attention. A normal exit involves raising a hinged floor section, unfastening a down-swinging hatch, pulling a small tubular ladder from a hidden compartment, and climbing down. To abandon the aircraft while "upstairs," however, it is permissible to forget the ladder, as long as you remember to snap on your parachute pack, otherwise it would be one long step to the ground. For baling out, the belly hatch would seem to be ideal because it eliminates the danger of being struck by the rudder or tailplane. For quick action you simply lift the floor section and step on a pedal which jettisons the outer door and away you go.

The air brakes hissed and sighed, the engines rumbled in slight acceleration and the black tarmac rolled under the transparent nose as we taxied out to the take-off position. The pilot was fanning his glance across the instrument panel in a final cockpit check, his left hand nursing two ivory cubes which crowned the throttle levers. Fuel levels; air, hydraulic and oil pressures; oil, carburettor and cylinder head temperatures; flying instruments, tachometers, fuel selector switches . . . everything checked. The engines were revved up and we were all set to go.

THE propeller pitch levers went forward into "fine" for take-off, which meant that the blade angles were set to bite thin slices of air while swirling at maximum speed, thus developing full power, like a car in low gear. Then the ivory throttle-handles went forward, the tail lifted, and there was a vivid catapulting impression as the plane surged forward. In an incredibly brief moment we were suddenly rocketing along at 130 miles an hour and the Mosquito leaped into the air. We shot upward in an astonishing mile-a-minute climb which simply snatched the airfield out of sight and left us floating in space 7,000 feet above the flat contours of the city.

Once aloft, operation of the aircraft appeared to be amazingly simple. There was the control column rising between the pilot's knees and surmounted by a semi-wheel, something like vertical handlebars. Turning the wheel banked the plane, while pushing or pulling dived or climbed it. The pilot explained that in such a fast aircraft the rudder pedals were almost unnecessary, even in aerobatics, because when the plane banked it turned of its own accord. De Havilland proceeded to demonstrate.

Toronto Was Upside Down!

WITHOUT even diving for extra speed, as in slower planes, he simply eased back on the wheel . . . The nose came up sharply and the world seemed to be clinging to our tail; then the Mosquito arched over on to its back and, momentarily, there we were in the weirdest of attitudes. We seemed to be quite normal, but there was the city of Toronto fantastically hanging upside down. We could see it by peering *up* through the plexiglass of the cockpit roof. Then, without the slightest stress or discomfort, we were around the invisible barrel hoop and flying level again.

"The roll is just as simple," the pilot said. And even as he spoke, the nose came up slightly above the horizon and he turned the wheel sharply to the right. Suddenly we were following the contours of an imaginary corkscrew and once again the world was performing weirdly. There it was on edge, pivoting against the right wing tip, then it careened up over our heads and slid down the other side to flash by the left wing tip. Around it went, once, twice, three times. Then it settled down beneath us and stayed put for a few moments.

As our pilot had promised, there was none of the unpleasant sensation of hanging upside down out of the seat and against the safety belt that would be taken for granted in slower planes. The centrifugal force of those high speed manoeuvres kept us pressed comfortably against the seat cushions regardless of the plane's attitude. Thus the aerobatics were simple. To the passenger it was just a case of sitting there in serene comfort while the world went "haywire."

The only unpleasant gyrations were the tight vertical bank and the pull out from a steep dive. The tight vertical bank was something like the motor-cycle "wall of death" in the midway but infinitely faster. In both instances there seemed to be an irresistible pressure seeking to shove you through the seat, draining the blood from your head and dimming your vision. Eventually this titanic squeeze play knocks you unconscious and you black out; but our manoeuvring was slightly less terrific than that.

We plummeted almost to deck level, skimming the waves along the waterfront. Coming out of that dive, a glance at the airspeed dial showed the needle quivering on 450 miles per hour! There was still no overpowering sensation of great speed until we flashed by docks and warehouses. Then it was not difficult to understand why they claim it takes two men on the ground to watch the Mosquito, one to see it coming, the other to see it going. It is reported that the first English farmer to see the original Mosquito unlimbering had only one word to describe his impression. "Crikey!" he said.

'Those Crazy Airmen!'

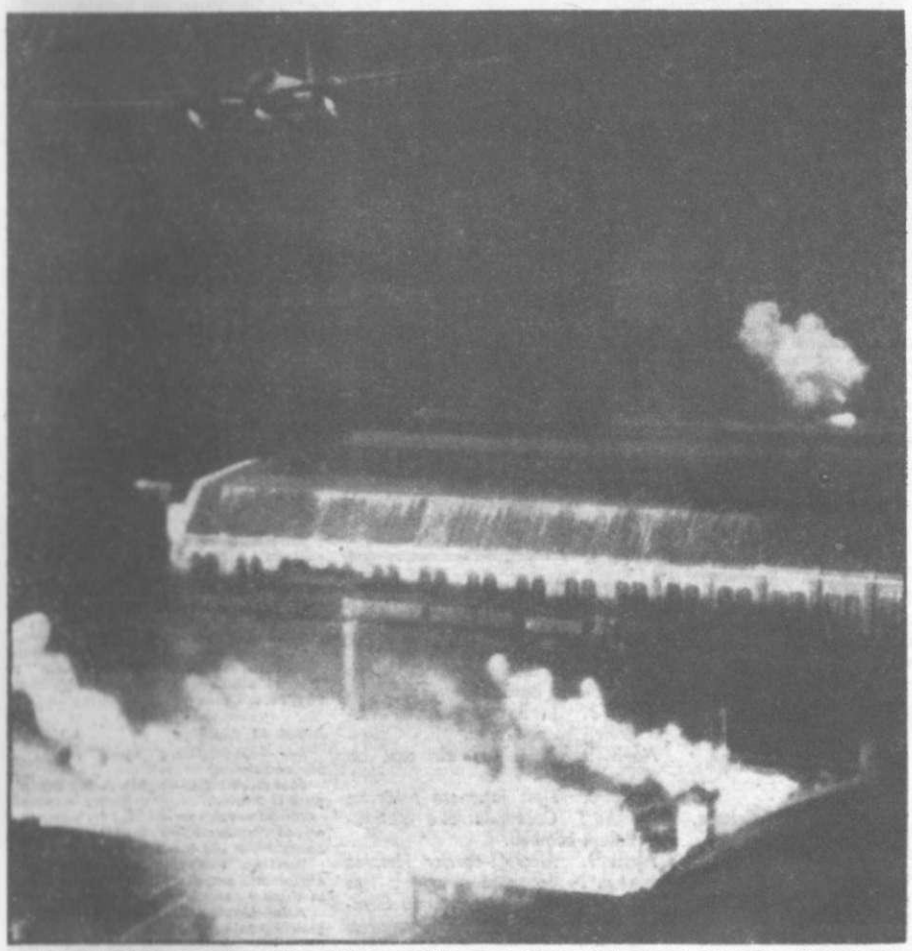
NOW we were low over downtown Toronto, looping, rolling, twisting and finally shooting skyward in a spectacular vertical roll. In all the confusion the writer sometimes lost track of the city and didn't know whether to look up, down, sideways or back over the tail to see it. But otherwise it was an altogether comfortable ride.

Thus we sat in relative ease and safety, while throngs of people in the streets below craned their necks, muttered about "those crazy airmen," and narrowly escaped death under the wheels of automobiles whose drivers were also gazing upward. According to subsequent newspaper reports, Geoffrey de Havilland's aerobatics were tying up city traffic in blocks.

Sighting a fast Norwegian attack bomber as it wheeled over Island Airport, de Havilland proceeded to make its pilot feel pretty silly. We literally flew circles around the single-engined bomber, looping up over its nose and down behind the tail, barrel rolling around it and finally twisting almost straight up in front of it.

RETURNING to the airport, we encountered a camouflaged Lockheed Ventura, one of the fastest of twin-engined bombers. It was winging eastward, probably destined for transatlantic ferrying to England. Our pilot calmly shut off one engine, advanced the throttle of the other Rolls, then proceeded to skim past the Ventura in an astounding demonstration of single-engined speed. To emphasize his point, he then put the Mosquito through several slow rolls, still on the single engine.

In a final flourish our Mosquito, now on both engines, swooped down over the telephone wires to flash across the airport at something more than seven miles a minute, then careened gracefully up and over to execute a roll off the top of the loop. The engines blurped, backfired, then purred softly as the throttles came back and we sloped steeply to a "hot" three-point landing.



MOSQUITOES, as told in this and the preceding page, have great powers of attack. A force of these machines bombed railway workshops and installations at Namur, Belgium, on April 3, 1943. This photo was taken during the raid, and shows a Mosquito lit up by a bomb-burst in the foreground.
Photo, British Official: Crown Copyright

In Burma We Explored a City of the Dead

An Indian Army observer who has recently returned across the frontier to India was one of a British patrol that penetrated enemy-occupied Burma to what was once a busy town, but is now strewn with human skeletons. His grim story of this scene of horror and desolation is given below.

"ROUTINE" operation they called the patrol when we left our base on the 'home" side of the border, where for the last few months cloud, mist and rain enveloped the countryside. We struck off the road after a few miles and followed a bridle path which plunged through dense tropical foliage. Soon we were provided with our first typical example of the high degree of improvisation which is a feature of these operations in Burma.

Across a raging stream, a temporary bridge of bamboo and telephone wire had been constructed by an earlier patrol. To supports on either side of the river had been fastened several strands of wire, from which the superstructure of the temporary bridge was suspended. The roadway was formed by interlaced bamboo, covered with cane matting, and in an emergency would be capable of bearing a light motor vehicle. Across the bridge the ground rose to over 2,000 feet in a distance of just under two miles. The path up which we struggled, during a downpour of rain, was a mountain stream in full flood. Our arrival, drenched and exhausted, at the summit brought us to the end of the first of many days of marching—and to an advanced post situated in a Naga village.

Next day we continued down into a valley. The rain had stopped for a while, but as we descended the temperature increased and our clothing was as wet from perspiration as it had been on the previous day from rain. The going was easier now, and in the early afternoon we contacted our most advanced position, which is held by Indian troops; in fact it has never been evacuated. So far we had not met opposition. Occasionally a snake would slither across the path in front of us, and deep in the jungle we would hear the screaming and chattering of monkeys disturbed by our approach.

IN BURMA, as told in this page, the horrors of war have been fully experienced. Here is a glimpse of the lighter side—men of the Lancashire Fusiliers at a jungle "cookhouse."
Photo, British Official

From time to time figures, semi-naked but carrying a rifle and ammunition, would leap out in front of us from the jungle and make a mystic sign. They were members of the guerilla force, drawn from Naga and Kuki tribesmen, who operate throughout the hills. Having satisfied themselves as to our bona fides, they would disappear again into the depths of the jungle.

Once we met a party of refugees, numbering about forty, making for India. They told a pitiful tale of Japanese and traitor-Burman cruelty and treachery. Burmans whom we occasionally met towards the end of the outward journey appeared to be friendly and answered freely all the many questions that were asked by the Intelligence Officer who accompanied the patrol.

Late one afternoon we arrived at our destination—formerly a busy centre, now literally a city of the dead. There was no sign of life. Buildings appeared as if they were still occupied. On entering we found sometimes only emptiness, but sometimes human skeletons lying around. Cars were parked along the streets as though the owners had stopped for a moment to do some shopping. I opened the door of one of these cars. Inside was a skeleton.

There was horror in that town, an atmosphere of death and decay. It had been the end of a long, hard journey for many exhausted, diseased and hunger-stricken people who had died rather than give in.

We turned then towards India. We waded through rivers and mud, into which at times we sank knee deep. Day after day swarms of mosquitoes and sand flies tormented us. Here we improvised a bridge; there we hacked a way through dense undergrowth. Always we watched for—hoped for—signs of the enemy, for the memory lingered of the city of the dead in the Burmese jungle.

OUR DIARY OF THE WAR

MARCH 31, 1943, Wednesday *1,306th day*

Air.—U.S. Flying Fortresses raided shipyards at Rotterdam in daylight.

Mediterranean.—Nearly 100 Flying Fortresses raided three aerodromes and harbour at Cagliari, Sardinia.

Russian Front.—In the Kuban Soviet troops occupied Anastayevskaya.

Burma.—R.A.F. Blenheims bombed oil installations at Bhamo.

APRIL 1, Thursday *1,307th day*

Air.—Mosquitoes raided power station and railway workshops at Trier and Ehrang in W. Germany.

North Africa.—Very heavy Allied air raid on El Maou airfield at Sfax.

Mediterranean.—R.A.F. and U.S. bombers made low-level raid on Messina.

India.—Thirty Jap bombers attacking Feni, S.E. Bengal, were intercepted by Hurricanes.

Australasia.—Air battle off Guadalcanal; 16 Jap fighters shot down for loss of six American aircraft.

APRIL 2, Friday *1,308th day*

Air.—R.A.F. made night raid on Lorient and St. Nazaire.

Australasia.—Allied heavy bombers attacked Jap shipping at Kavieng, New Ireland.

U.S.A.—American aircraft made eight raids on Kiska, Aleutians, and also bombed Attu.

APRIL 3, Saturday *1,309th day*

Air.—Daylight raids on Abbeville and docks at Brest; another heavy night attack on Essen.

North Africa.—Allied troops occupied Cap Serrat, 40 m. W. of Bizerta.

Australasia.—Allied heavy bombers again attacked Jap warships at Kavieng.

APRIL 4, Sunday *1,310th day*

Sea.—Admiralty announced loss of submarine Tigris.

Air.—U.S. Flying Fortresses made daylight raid on Renault works near Paris. At night Kiel received its heaviest bombing from the R.A.F.

Mediterranean.—Heavy raid on Naples by Allied bombers; Palermo and Syracuse also attacked.

Russian Front.—On Donetz front Russians repelled German attacks near Izyum; in the Kuban Soviet troops made progress.

India.—Jap aircraft raided airfield near Chittagong on Bay of Bengal.

Australasia.—Jap shipping at Kavieng again attacked by Allied bombers; in all seven warships and five merchant ships were sunk or damaged.

APRIL 5, Monday *1,311th day*

Air.—Large force of U.S. bombers raided Erla aero-engine works at Antwerp; Venturas attacked Brest docks.

Mediterranean.—Allied bombers made heavy day and night raids on airfields in Sicily and N. Tunisia.

India.—R.A.F. Hurricanes drove off more than 50 Jap bombers raiding S.E. Bengal.

Burma.—U.S. bombers attacked Mandalay and Prome by day; R.A.F. made night raid on railway station at Rangoon.

U.S.A.—American bombers and fighters made six attacks in the Aleutians.

APRIL 6, Tuesday *1,312th day*

Air.—R.A.F. fighter-bombers raided airfield at St. Omer and steel-works near Caen.

North Africa.—Eighth Army launched attack north of Gabès against Wadi Akarit. Heavy air raid on Sfax.

Mediterranean.—Heavy attack on shipping and Sicilian straits and docks at Trapani; Naples and Messina raided by night.

Burma.—Our troops withdrew from positions at Donbaik to meet outflanking move by Japanese.

APRIL 7, Wednesday *1,313th day*

North Africa.—Eighth Army advancing from Wadi Akarit made contact with Second U.S. Army Corps from El Guettar.

Australasia.—Japanese aircraft sank three Allied ships off Guadalcanal; in air battle U.S. fighters brought down 39 Jap planes.

General.—Hitler and Mussolini began four-day conference at Fuehrer's H.Q. Bolivia at war with Axis nations.

APRIL 8, Thursday *1,314th day*

Air.—Announced that in daylight raids on Renault works on April 4 and Erla works at Antwerp on April 5 a total of 70 German aircraft were shot down by Flying Fortresses and Liberators. R.A.F. made heavy night attack on the Ruhr.

North Africa.—Allied aircraft carried out heavy attacks on enemy transport on coastal road from Mahares to Sfax.

APRIL 9, Friday *1,315th day*

Sea.—Admiralty announced that destroyer Harvester had been torpedoed and sunk in Atlantic after battle with U-boats.

Air.—R.A.F. made another night attack on the Ruhr, with Duisburg as main target.

North Africa.—Germans announced evacuation of Pichon, Central Tunisia.

APRIL 10, Saturday *1,316th day*

Air.—R.A.F. made night raid on S.W. Germany. Koenigsberg bombed by Soviet aircraft.

North Africa.—Eighth Army occupied port of Sfax.

Mediterranean.—Italian heavy cruiser Trieste sunk and Gorizia damaged by Flying Fortresses in harbour of La Maddalena, Sardinia. Lightning fighters shot down 30 enemy transport planes in Sicilian straits.

Burma.—Japanese infiltration through the jungle led to further withdrawal by our troops in the Mayu peninsula.

Australasia.—Heavy bombers attacked Jap base at Wewak, New Guinea.

APRIL 11, Sunday *1,317th day*

North Africa.—First Army troops entered Kairouan; First and Eighth Armies made contact near Fondouk.

Mediterranean.—Lightning fighters shot down 31 enemy transport planes in the Sicilian straits.

U.S.A.—American aircraft made four raids on Jap bases in Kiska, Aleutians.

Australasia.—Jap dive-bombers and fighters attacked Allied shipping in Oro Bay, New Guinea.

APRIL 12, Monday *1,318th day*

Air.—Koenigsberg again raided by Soviet aircraft.

North Africa.—Eighth Army occupied port of Sousse.

Mediterranean.—U.S. Liberators raided Naples; R.A.F. made night attacks on Palermo and Messina harbours.

Russian Front.—Soviet troops beat off German attack on Volkhov front, aimed at cutting Leningrad's lifeline with east.

Australasia.—One hundred Jap aircraft made heaviest raid yet on airfields near Port Moresby, New Guinea; 37 destroyed or badly damaged.

General.—Antonescu, Rumanian Prime Minister, received at Hitler's H.Q.

★ Flash-backs ★

1940

April 8. *Allied Governments notified Norway of mine-laying in Norwegian waters.*

April 9. *Germans invaded Norway and Denmark.*

April 10. *First Battle of Narvik; destroyer Hunter sunk, Hardy beached.*

1941

April 1. *Asmara, capital of Eritrea, surrendered to British.*

April 3. *Benghazi evacuated in face of Rommel's advance.*

April 5. *In Abyssinia British forces entered Addis Ababa.*

April 6. *Germans invaded Greece and Yugoslavia.*

April 10. *British and Imperial troops made contact with Germans in northern Greece.*

1942

April 1. *Japanese launched heavy attacks on Bataan peninsula.*

April 3. *In Burma British withdrew from Prome.*

April 5. *Japanese air raid on Colombo.*

April 6. *First Japanese raids on India: Cocanada and Vizagapatam bombed.*

April 9. *Aircraft-carrier Hermes sunk by Japanese aircraft, loss of cruisers Dorsetshire and Cornwall announced. Trincomalee, Ceylon, raided by Japanese. American resistance ended on Bataan; Corregidor holding out.*

Editor's Postscript

NEVER since the War began has London seemed so full as now, when those who, because of their business or habitation, may call themselves Londoners are jostled by crowds of suburban and provincial visitors, when it is thronged by men and women in a rich variety of uniform and speaking all the tongues of the United Nations. Many of these have never seen London before, and all will return to their homes in distant parts without ever seeing it as we who have loved and lived in it for so long would have liked it to be remembered. For there is no denying that the London of today is decidedly shabby and in parts down-at-heel. Bombs have left monstrous chasms, beautiful churches are burnt-out shells, once-graceful buildings are as gaunt and ugly as a toothless harridan. In one detail, however, lack of material has worked for temporary good. I refer to the horrible disfigurement first introduced by our good American friends by way of cinema publicity. Finely-proportioned façades used to be plastered over with crudely-coloured mammoth pictures so that only scraps of the buildings remained visible. I hope the authorities will take steps after the War to prevent a recrudescence of these abominably inartistic displays, which might be in place on Coney Island or at Blackpool's show grounds, but were eyesores in the Strand, the Haymarket, and many of our best thoroughfares.

"A THOUSAND Germans were killed," "the enemy suffered heavy losses" . . . How often do we find some such statement in the communiqués coming from the Russian front! And the unthinking receive the news with a half-smile of satisfaction. But in a battle the casualties are never all on one side; if thousands of Germans have been killed, we may be sure that a great host of gallant Russians has fallen too. Our ally has won great victories, but only at a great price—and there's a limit to the price that can be paid. So many people, and among them some who ought to know better, write and talk as if Russia's manpower were inexhaustible—that the Soviet must crush the Axis by sheer weight of numbers. Yet, with practically the whole of Europe under his control, Hitler can call upon a population of over 300 millions, while Soviet Russia with fifty millions of her people in Nazi-occupied territory has a population of about 130 millions. Not numbers but generalship won Stalingrad for Russia. Well may Negley Farson write again and again in The Daily Mail of "the Red Army Millions Myth." He never hears a "Salute to Russia" programme without feeling a bit sick, he says, since, though they spring directly from the heart, "these cheers and pageants must be ashes in Stalin's mouth when *he* (and possibly he alone) is handed the terrible casualty lists showing the death-roll of his people." Farson is absolutely right in his declaration that Russia's death-roll should never be out of our thoughts—should temper our rejoicing over Red Army victories with sadness, even a measure of apprehension.

A FEW days after I had referred in these notes to those unhelpful officials, "swanking around clothed in a little authority," I received a letter from a reader in a township north of the Forth complaining bitterly of the conditions in the munitions factory in which he works. Inches of snow on the floor at times in the winter of a year ago, flooding in time of heavy rain, damp and chilly atmosphere, heating system broken down so that the men had to work with their raincoats on—these are some of the conditions he described; and he went on to tell of women having to stand twelve hours a day without so much as a cup of tea and forbidden to speak to one another. "No appeal seems possible," he concluded; "the factory inspector is but a name to workers, and one finds the official mind always suspicious of a worker and his complaints."

QUITE frankly I found these allegations a little hard to swallow; but I know, too, that there is no smoke without a fire. So I sent a note of the complaints—mentioning the factory, but not my correspondent's name—to the Ministry of Labour, in the belief that they would give the matter proper attention. In that I need hardly say I was well justified. The Ministry at once took up the matter with the District Inspector of Factories, and the terms of his report have been communicated to me. The Inspector considers that my correspondent's allegations are not substantiated. True, the factory is in a very exposed position, so that when the weather is very severe the firm have occasionally had trouble with snow coming through the windows and with flooding. But the Inspector has no knowledge of the heating system having broken down; and though the work on which the women are employed is usually done standing, there are seats for them to use at such times as there is an opportunity for them to sit down. I am afraid my correspondent is still not satisfied, but that is not for me to judge. Even in peacetime it was often said that factory inspectors had an impossible job, and nowadays their duties are infinitely more onerous. Conditions, too, in any particular factory change from day to day. But when Mr. Bevin's officials are receiving so many brickbats it is only fair to put on record this little instance of their courteous efficiency.

Sqdn.-Ldr. J. A. F. MacLACHLAN, D.S.O., D.F.C., and bar, one of the most successful of R.A.F. "night-intruders." He lost an arm during a fierce fight over Malta, and has destroyed fourteen enemy aircraft.

Drawn by Eric Kennington, Crown Copyright reserved

ON the face of it, it is a little surprising to find the Army Bureau of Current Affairs co-operating with the University of London Institute of Archaeology and C.E.M.A. (Council for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts) in arranging an exhibition of photographs entitled The Present Discovers the Past. But as one who has had the satisfaction of awakening an interest in archaeology in the minds of a host of readers, I confidently recommend a visit to the London Museum. The exhibition will remain on view until May 30. Its object is to vindicate the relevance of archaeology to modern life, and it is most interesting to study the comparisons between modern and ancient roads, houses, domestic appliances, agricultural implements, etc. Most striking, however, are the aerial photographs of such ancient wonders as Maiden Castle, Silbury Hill, the Uffington White Horse, Woodhenge, and the Cerne Giant. But most fascinating of all, perhaps, are those photographs of ordinary English fields which, when photographed from the air, are seen to be indelibly marked with the outlines of Roman walls, Saxon barrows, and Celtic fields. For a hole or ditch once dug in the chalk can never be obliterated; the soil tends to be more moist and less compact so that the corn grows taller and ripens later. Over ancient foundations the corn is short and ripens early.

READING the many tributes to Cardinal Hinsley, the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Westminster who died at his country home at Buntingford, Herts, on March 17, one could not but be struck by the universal recognition of his qualities as a churchman, as an English patriot, and as a man of fine and rich personality. Not so long ago Rome was "the scarlet woman," and it is less than a century since the Pope's appointment of Wiseman as first Archbishop of Westminster and Cardinal gave rise to the most bitter and prolonged agitation in religious circles. But today we have the Archbishop of Canterbury declaring that all whose aspirations are set upon a Christian Britain mourn Cardinal Hinsley; "many of us also mourn a most kindly and warm-hearted friend," and the Moderator of the Free Church Council (Dr. J. S. Whale) paying tribute to the Cardinal's warm humanity, moral directness, and fine Christian simplicity.

VERY much more cheerful is the latest letter I have received from our worthy correspondent in Malta, Mr. G. Fabri. It is dated early in March, when the much-bombed island had just assumed the offensive in real earnest. He speaks most appreciatively of the convoy ships that had entered the harbour and so swelled the island's stocks of food that whereas only a short time since the "hungry eyes of the thousands lining the bastions penetrated into the ships' holds and visualized their contents—flour for bread and milk for the babies," today the Maltese housewife has to make two trips to the grocer to bring in the fortnightly rations. "And as she stores them away in the kitchen cupboard she cannot fail to notice how the United Nations are striving to help Malta in every possible way. Salmon and butter, milk, sweets, and other important items: how closely knit is this small island to the large family of Allied Nations!" But he goes on to say that though things have changed so much for the better in Malta, that does not mean that there may not be a new flare-up at any time. "The Nazis may one day return—but how different is Malta in April 1943 from April of last year!"

This Pillbox Did Not Halt the Desert Army

ROMMEL'S DEFENSIVE LINE was brilliantly outflanked and the whole of the Mareth area occupied by Gen. Montgomery's forces by March 30, 1943. The battered Axis transport and armour, incessantly attacked from the air, streamed up the Tunisian coast towards Sfax and Sousse as the 8th Army vanguard swept without pause through the Gabès gap. These cheerful British sergeants have seen some hard fighting and are photographed at the entrance of their pillbox in the Mareth Line.

Photo, British Official: Crown Copyright

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